NAVY NEWS

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CURTAIN CALLS

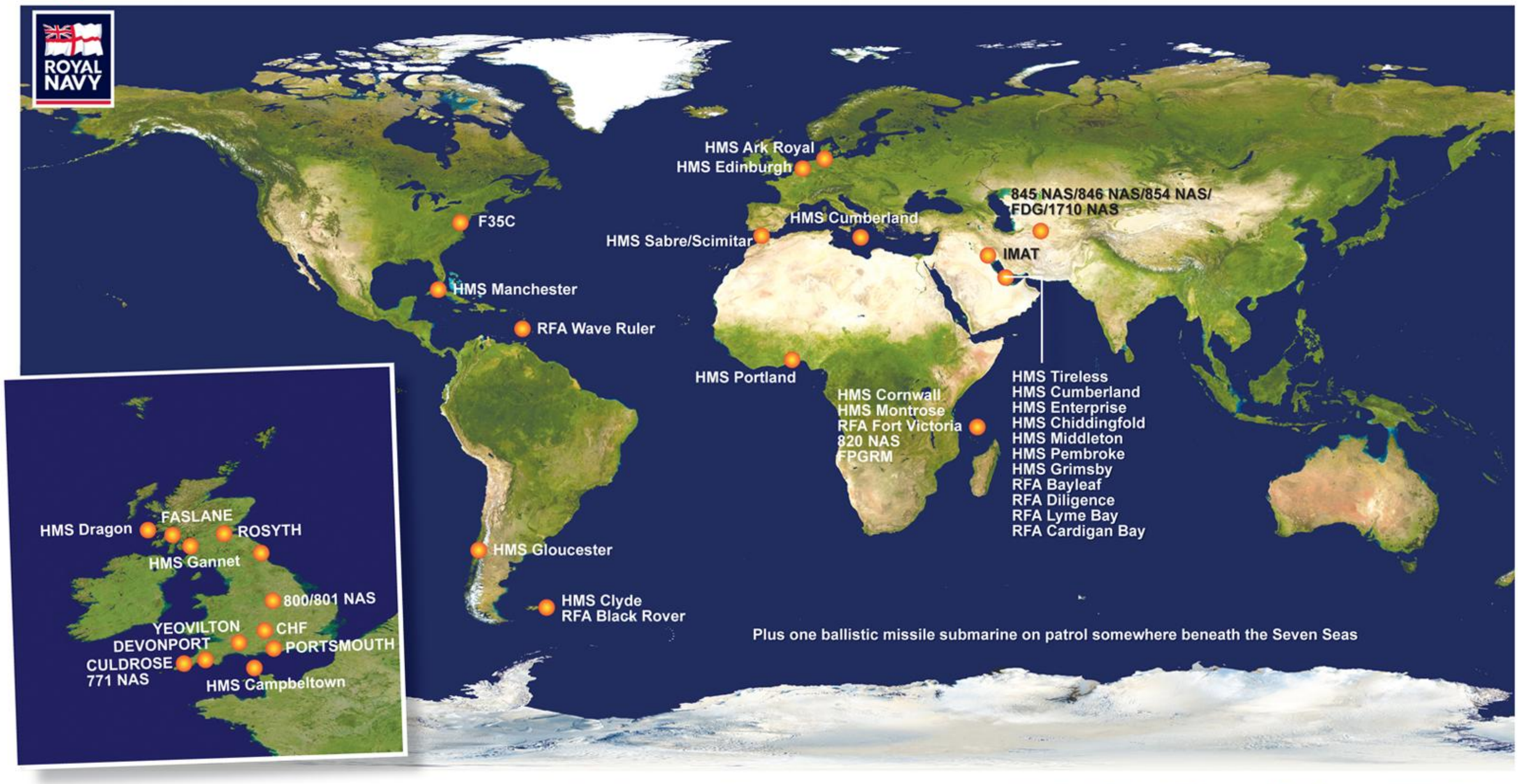
ON A brilliant December day veteran destroyer HMS Manchester returns to Portsmouth at the end of her final deployment, which saw her snare Caribbean drug-runners, help island communities hit hard by hurricanes, and pay a historic visit to Havana
See page 21.
Picture: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare, FRPU East

MANCHESTER'S LAST DUTY

ARK ROYAL'S SWANSONG

HARRIERS' FAREWELL TO HERON

GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

A NEW year dawns on a Royal Navy considerably smaller than 12 months ago – and one still perhaps rather shell-shocked by the ramifications of the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

The most high-profile victim of that review, **HMS Ark Royal**, paid her final visit to Portsmouth following a farewell tour of the UK and north-west Europe (*see our eight-page supplement*); her **800 NAS** Harriers had already departed on a farewell tour of their own which saw them make a final appearance at **RNAS Yeovilton** (*see page 11*).

As is customary at the year's end there was a flurry of ships returning to port for Christmas. **HMS Somerset** and **Northumberland** completed lengthy tours of duty east of Suez (Gulf for Somerset, Horn of Africa for her sister – *see right and page 5 respectively*) and **HMS Portland** finished her South Atlantic-Pacific-Caribbean-African deployment with a visit to Ghana (*see page 14*).

The curtain came down on **HMS Manchester**'s operational career when she returned to Portsmouth from the Caribbean. Among her last official duties, the first visit to Cuba by a British warship since 1957 (*see page 21*).

The Busy Bee's younger sister **HMS Gloucester** is also on her final deployment. So what better way to go out than with some 'gunnery funnery' in the Falklands (*see page 13*).

The youngest Type 42 in service, **HMS Edinburgh**, is working her way back to front-line effectiveness after a refit, visiting Den Helder in the Netherlands as part of her work-up (*see page 8*).

HMS Montrose delivered a parting shot to pirates by blasting a boat out of the water before making for home (*see page 5*) while the RN-RM-FAA-RFA team aboard **RFA Fort Victoria** offer us an insight into an anti-piracy deployment (*see pages 24-25*).

The atrocious weather conditions last month meant call outs for the Search and Rescuers of **HMS Gannet** (not entirely unexpected... *see page 4*) and **HMS Illustrious**; the carrier's ship's company were drafted in on the streets of Edinburgh to clear snow (*see page 5*).

Commando Helicopter Force was also caught up in the cold snap as it staged one of its largest exercises in years on Salisbury Plain (*see page 7*).

HMS Scott's in search of snow as she makes her second visit to Antarctica understudying for HMS Endurance which is still out of action (*see page 5*).

In Bahrain, survey ship **HMS Enterprise** hosted Defence Secretary Liam Fox, who visited fresh from delivering an important speech on the future of the RN at **HMS Collingwood** (*see page 4*).

Dr Fox was also present at a homecoming parade in Taunton where townsfolk turned out in force to honour the sacrifices made by **40 Commando** during its recent tour-of-duty in Afghanistan (*see page 15*).

In home waters, **HMS Campbeltown** bumped into (not literally) Cunard's newest liner in the Channel (*see pages 6 and 29*).

Rookie landing craft crew have been used the waters and shoreline around Plymouth to hone their skills with **1 Assault Group RM** (*see page 6*).

HMS Dragon has completed her first spell of sea trials, bringing the curtain down on an important year in the Type 45 destroyer programme (*see page 9*).

And finally, with the demise of the Harrier there's not been much to cheer WAFUs recently. But seven sailors have been offered a glimpse of the future, working with the jump jet's successor, the **Joint Strike Fighter**. The first naval carrier variant has been delivered to the US Navy at its world-famous Pax River airbase (*see page 10*).



Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford, FRPU West

A 'highly positive' deployment

TALK about a rude awakening.

One minute you've got your shades on, lapping up temperatures of 25°C-plus.

The next it's snowing, there's an Arctic wind and the temperature's struggling to stay positive.

Still, home is home.

After six months away in the Gulf, HMS Somerset returned to Devonport – and a suitably festive welcome from loved ones, friends and affiliates.

Indeed, the frigate really pushed the boat out for the people who've supported them. Not only was there a Royal Marines Band on the jetty and a P2000 escort (HMS Raider) up the Hamoaze, not only did the affiliated Sea Cadet unit (Weston-Super-Mare) turn up in force to provide a band and guard, but St Nicholas himself was on the quayside (actually in a marquee, decorated with Christmas tree and all the trimmings) handing out gifts to youngsters.

All the fun and frivolity is a far cry from 122 days on station in the Gulf – a challenging task in a challenging economic, political, military and climatic environment.

Nearly eight years after the war ended and 18 months since the bulk of British military personnel were pulled out of Iraq, Operation Telic remains a standing commitment for the Royal Navy – although that role has transformed considerably since 2003.

The key mission remains to protect Iraq's lifeblood, her oil exports, but the growing efficacy of the Iraqi Navy and Marines means that they've assumed responsibility for safeguarding the older Khawr Al Amaya terminal, leaving the RN to patrol the newer Al Basrah platform a few miles away.

Well, it's still pumping out. Around three million barrels every day.

To ensure it did so, the Type 23's Navy/Royal Marines boarding team visited 250 boats in the region, partly as reassurance, partly to check whether there was anything untoward going on. The response from mariners to Somerset's presence was, says the frigate's CO Cdr Andrew Burns, "highly positive".

His ship has also worked closely with the region's Armed Forces, not least those from Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and, upon exiting the Gulf to begin the 7,000-mile journey home, Oman.

The visit to the latter also allowed some R&R, notably diving and exploring the wadis and mountains. There was more downtime in Valletta and the final port of call, Barcelona, before the final 2,000-mile leg of the passage home.

For Somerset's ship's company it's back to work this month after extended Christmas leave; once maintenance has been completed following the frigate's Gulf exertions the frigate will conduct extensive training before deploying once more.

From sand to snow...

BLIMEY. What's this white stuff?

The Arctic conditions gripping Blighty might have been a shock to the system for HMS Somerset's ship's company after six months in the Gulf, but at least there wasn't any snow in Devonport...

...Unlike 80 miles to the northeast, as the ship's flight found.

The Mk8 Lynx of 229 Flight found much of the South West blanketed by snow as they left the frigate behind and made a bee-line for RNAS Yeovilton.

The helicopter and her air/ground crew from 815 Naval Air Squadron had spent the previous six months patrolling the Arabian Gulf on Operation Telic.

And working at the height of the Middle East summer presented some challenges to aircrew and engineers keeping the cab out there and in the air in support of the ship's boarding operations and patrol duties.

"For most of my team this was their first deployment to the region and they have worked hard – producing some exceptional results," said 229 Flight Commander Lt Stephen Cooke.

The ship and her Flight took part in several training and exercise taskings during their six months away: winching and force protection exercises with the Gibraltar Squadron; exercising in the Mediterranean with the American ships of the USS Harry S Truman Carrier Battle Group; and working with the Kuwaiti Navy.

As 229 enjoyed some welcome 'me time' at home, another of the 19 Small Ship's Flights under the 815 aegis was celebrating.

206 Flight have been awarded the annual Sopwith Pup Trophy (which does indeed feature the eponymous Great War biplane) by Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham, Chief of Staff (Aviation and Carriers).

The trophy is awarded to the Flight which achieves the highest level of operational capability throughout the year, and obviously 206 were rather proud to receive the accolade for their time on board Somerset's sister, HMS Portland.

Even before they joined Portland in autumn 2008, 206 Flight had already notched up another win with the Wigley Trophy for the best aviation performance on Operational Sea Training.

And once on station off the Horn of Africa in early 2009, HMS Portland and her Flight threw themselves into the fight to protect merchant ships from piracy, notching up four counter-piracy interdictions, as well as 11 drug-busting efforts.

Lt Cdr Joe Dransfield, 206 Flight Commander, said: "The Flight are really proud to receive this recognition for their hard work but by far the greatest reward was seeing the combined efforts of a highly-skilled team result in the direct disruption of illegal activity in the troubled waters of the Gulf of Aden."

■ *See February's* Navy News *for a feature on 815, Europe's largest helicopter squadron*



picture: la(phot) vicki benwell, rnas yeovilton

GLOBAL REACH

Argyll back 'in good order'

TO SEVERAL hundred sailors and families, only one ship beginning with the letter A mattered on Friday December 3...

...and it wasn't Ark Royal.

While most media eyes were focused on Portsmouth Harbour and the passing of the aircraft carrier, 180 miles away with fewer cameras, but no less pride and certainly no more notches on the thermometer, HMS Argyll was formally welcomed back into the Fleet after a 12-month absence.

The frigate has undergone a £20m overhaul to make her the Navy's most potent Type 23. She returned home to Devonport back in late September, but it was only at the beginning of December that there was time for Argyll's rededication.

In between emerging from that revamp in Rosyth and the rededication, there's been a lot of work by the ship's company and engineers from Babcock to prepare Argyll for her final inspection – which she passed.

There's also been a good slice of sea time, largely off the west coast of Scotland. The trials sandwiched a five-day visit to Liverpool, allowing Merseysider CO Cdr Paul Stroude to bring his ship home.

With Argyll in the middle of trials, there wasn't time to open the gangway to the general public, but she could host selected guests, including the Mersey Naval and Maritime Society, Rossendale Aviation Society and the World Ship Society.

And so to Devonport on a bright if chilly December day and rededication in the presence of Lady Levene of Portsoken who launched F231 at the Yarrow (now BAE) yard in Scotstoun 21 years ago.

She inspected a 24-strong ceremonial guard formed by members of the ship's company before Chaplain of the Fleet the Rev Scott Brown led the service of rededication.

And as all such ceremonies should end, so did this one: with the cutting of a cake, courtesy of the youngest sailor aboard, 18-year-old ET(WE) Scott Leng.

"HMS Argyll is ready, once again, to conduct operations as part of the Fleet," said Cdr Stroude. "We are very proud of our ship and what we have achieved so far and are now looking forward to the challenges of operational sea training and our subsequent deployment.

"I was particularly delighted to be able to share our ceremonial return to the Fleet with so many families.

"The Navy places tremendous demands on us all and the support of our families and friends has played a major part in helping HMS Argyll get back to sea in such good order."

Le roi est mort...

...VIVE le roi...

Barely were the lines thrown across and the gangways in place as HMS Ark Royal entered Portsmouth for the last time than a little celebration was taking place 180 miles to the west.

For as Ark Royal bowed out, so for the first time in her seven-year history HMS Albion assumed the mantle of the nation's flagship.

It was, said her CO Capt James Morley, a moment of "great pride" for him and his 330 sailors and Royal Marines.

For the past two decades the title of Fleet flagship has been shared among the trio of Invincible-class carriers and, more recently, between Ark and Illustrious.

The latter is due to emerge from refit later this year, but until she's operational, amphibious assault ship Albion will serve as Britain's No.1 warship.

Typically, she has taken it in turns with her Devonport-based 'bedfellows' Bulwark and Ocean to serve as the nation's amphibious task force flagship, a title she has borne since early last year.

The pain and the prize

THE Navy faces five years of pain, but will be 're-born' come 2015, Defence Secretary Liam Fox told sailors in Fareham.

Addressing First Sea Lord's annual conference at HMS Collingwood, Dr Fox said Britain was – and must remain – a naval power.

He conceded that recent decades – "in particular the current one" – had been tough for the Senior Service, some "poor decisions" had been made, and the Fleet had shrunk "considerably".

The minister added: "I know the decisions such as the reduction in the frigate fleet, on the Harriers, and the Ark Royal – particularly given the fantastic service these ships and planes have provided over the years – are particularly painful for the Navy.

"Will the next few years be difficult? Undoubtedly.

"But the prize for the Royal Navy at the end of this process is significant."

Dr Fox pledged that from 2015, the Royal Navy would be "re-grown... centred around cutting edge people and cutting edge war fighting capabilities.

"The Queen Elizabeth carriers, the Joint Strike Fighter, the Type 45s, the Type 26 Global Combat Ship, the Astute-class submarines – all will be leaders in their field and represent the most capable high-technology platforms the Royal Navy has ever had."

The minister told his audience that First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, had "fought hard" for his Service as the details of the Strategic Defence and Security Review were thrashed out.

That review cost the RN her flagship, her Harriers, all four of her remaining Type 22 frigates and 5,000 men and women.

The Defence Secretary said such short-term pain was vital if Britain's Armed Forces were to enjoy "long-term stability".

Dr Fox told the conference that the national debt to be repaid in 2011 – £46bn – outstripped the defence budget by £9bn, while the programme of military spending the Coalition government inherited was unaffordable. The MOD had to cut its cloth accordingly.

The Defence Secretary said he regretted the uncertainty caused by the defence review, not least when it came to the 5,000 sailors and marines who would lose their jobs.

"I am acutely aware that behind each number is a person, who through no fault of their own face an uncertain future and that each person has aspirations, a career, a livelihood and a family to support," he added.

Despite the cuts announced last October, the minister stressed that as an island nation, Britain "must remain a maritime power".

He continued: "The sea not only protects us, but, as a trading nation reliant on imports of goods and energy, the sea is a crucial artery that helps sustain our way of life and our prosperity.

"We can never afford to become 'sea blind' – whatever other military priorities we may have in the short-term.

"Keeping the sea lanes and lines of communications open for the global transfer of goods and energy is vital."

Dr Fox told the conference that one of the keys to the success of the RN in the coming decade was stressing its importance to the British people.

He said that at times he felt "the Navy is less successful, even less willing, at selling itself than the other Services".

The Defence Secretary continued: "The work that is done by the Navy – from humanitarian relief to extracting our citizens from hot zones, from exercising with our partners to piracy prevention – these operations need to be better understood by the British public, because they won't automatically see the link between these and how they benefit the influence of Britain in the wider world."

He told delegates that the Navy not only had to put the case for sea power, "but to demonstrate it to the British people regularly", because the future would require the RN "more than perhaps in recent decades".

The minister has spent a lot of time with the front-line RN and RM recently – in Bahrain with HMS Enterprise (*see above*), in Taunton welcoming home 40 Commando (*see page 15*), in Scotland visiting HMS Vanguard returning from a deterrent patrol.

These visits were, he said, an important reminder that "it is not ships or planes or submarines, but our people that make the Royal Navy great.

"To all of them I send my admiration and my thanks on behalf of the nation we all represent."

■ You can read the full speech at is.gd/ioDq6 (we shortened the convoluted MOD web address for you...).



● *Dr Fox chats with HMS Enterprise's ship's company on the survey vessel's bridge in Bahrain*

Star visitor for starship

DEFENCE Secretary Liam Fox praised the work of sailors in the Gulf region when he dropped in on HMS Enterprise in Bahrain.

Dr Fox told RN personnel on operations east of Suez that their work was vital both to the stability of the Middle East and to Britain's long-term future.

Bahrain is the hub of RN operations in the Gulf region and home to the Senior Service's regional headquarters, the UK Maritime Component Command, headed by Cdre Tim Fraser.

As of the beginning of December there were a dozen RN and RFA vessels in the region – 1,300 Senior Service personnel.

Aside from the regular 'churn' of frigates through Bahrain on their way to and from Iraq's oil platforms, the kingdom is the base for four minehunters, plus RFA tankers and support ships on their infrequent visits to port.

As for Enterprise, she's spent much of 2010 working off Oman – in particular the east-coast port of Duqm, roughly half-way between Muscat and Salalah.

Duqm is a boom town and its port is undergoing a £1bn transformation.

With the anticipated traffic, it's essential that the approaches and surrounding waters are free of navigational hazards – hence the need for the best charts courtesy of the UK Hydrographic Office... based on data gathered by Enterprise's sensors.

The survey vessel's CO Cdr Jon Holmes said the work had been carried out in "testing conditions – not just the intense heat of the Middle Eastern sun, but also the annual south-westerly Khareef winds and swells.

"The crew has worked very hard and I am pleased this has been recognized at such a high level.

"More than 23,000 ships pass through the Gulf of Aden each year, so the charts that Enterprise helps to produce are of benefit to mariners from the UK and around the world."

Sailors from three of the four RN Bahrain-based minehunters on board – Pembroke, Grimsby and Middleton – plus staff from UKMCC, the Forward Support Unit and RAF personnel were invited aboard Enterprise for Dr Fox's visit.

They discussed their experiences of being deployed in the region and told the MP what it would be like to be away from home over the Christmas period.

The defence secretary told Enterprise's sailors they had "played a significant part in ensuring safe access for merchant vessels in the Gulf of Oman.

"I also commend the training and exercises you undertake with our partners. It demonstrates our capabilities and forges trust. We need to continue to enhance those relationships, and forge new ones, wherever we can.

"We cannot afford to disengage with one of the world's most important strategic areas."



(Le) crunch meeting

THIS may look like a picture of a lot of men in suits sat around a table...

...but the chaps on the left are the Navy Board, led by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, those on the right are their French counterparts, headed by Amiral Pierre-Francois Forissier, and this is an historic meeting between the two Navies.

The two Fleets are working more closely following the Treaty for Defence and Security signed by David Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy in November.

Much of the coverage surrounding the treaty involved the use of France's aircraft carrier and her fast jets (with the axing of the Harrier, Britain has no fixed-wing aircraft to operate at sea until the Joint Strike Fighter arrives *circa* 2020).

But the agreement will embrace all three Armed Services of both nations as they look to share training, equipment, technology, and logistics.

In the maritime arena, on the table (if you'll excuse the pun) is the ability to deploy a UK-French carrier strike group, develop a joint doctrine, train together and work on a common supply chain.

"The UK and France share many common interests – our Navies already work closely together on a broad range of issues," said Admiral Stanhope.

"In light of the recently-signed treaty, it makes sense to consider how we can develop that."

Helvellyn's angels

RESCUERS from HMS Gannet faced a particularly tricky mission in the Lake District when the cold snap caused chaos.

The Search and Rescue fliers from Prestwick were scrambled after a walker fell 300ft off England's highest peak.

The woman, a student from London, had been walking with a group of friends on Helvellyn's notorious Striding Edge when she lost her footing in the fading light.

Forty minutes later a Gannet Sea King was overhead – but the rescue was far from routine.

There were so many groups of walkers and climbers on the Cumbrian mountain that it proved difficult to locate the injured student.

"There were probably about eight or ten different totally unrelated groups of climbers on the mountainside in that area, many wearing head torches." said winchman PO 'Wiggy' Wigfull.

"With the arrival of the helicopter they all looked up, which made it difficult to find our casualty."

Using the Sea King's spotlight and with the help of a mountain rescue team the casualty was located and the airlift to safety could begin. In pitch darkness. And temperatures of -11°C.

It was too dangerous on the icy slopes of the mountain for Wiggy to unhook after being winched down 150ft. He stayed on the wire and walked up the treacherous mountainside to the casualty.

"It can be hard enough to treat a casualty on flat ground in daylight on a sunny day, but throw in the slope, weather and darkness and it all becomes quite a different matter," said Wiggy.

The climber was given pain relief before moved on to a stretcher, ready for transfer to the Sea King; the downwash from the helicopter's blades not only kicked up the snow on the ground but took the ambient temperature down to around -30°C.

Once safely on board the helicopter, the casualty was was transferred to hospital in Whitehaven with a suspected fracture to her leg.

Exposure for Gloucester

THE Fighting G flew the flag for Britain and her industries when she attended one of South America's main nautical showcases.

HMS Gloucester sailed into Valparaíso in Chile for the week-long Exponaval, a mixture of naval conference and defence fair.

The exposition draws diplomatic and naval delegates, industry, plus the general public.

Gloucester served as the backdrop for UK defence firms to promote their wares, among them BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce.

As for the ship's company, they laid a wreath at the Chilean Naval Memorial and took part in the Santa Barbara gun run.

"The hospitality Gloucester received during the week was outstanding," said the destroyer's Commanding Officer Cdr David George.

"We've been able to throw the doors open and pay our respects in return."

With the expo over and the crowds departed, the ship remained in Chile's famous port for another week for some much-needed TLC, notably re-painting the hull and upper-deck to prepare it for another thrashing courtesy of the South Atlantic.

Gloucester is away over the winter – or austral summer – as Britain's patrol ship in the Southern Hemisphere; she's due back in Portsmouth this spring.

Gloucester goes a-gunning, page 13

Illustrious digs deep

LITERALLY.

Twenty-six sailors from the carrier found themselves drafted on to the streets of the Scottish capital as snowfall paralysed swathes of the Central Lowlands.

Lusty is in the later stages of an 18-month overhaul across the Forth in Rosyth (she's due back at sea this summer).

Alongside comrades from the Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and RAF personnel from Leuchars, the sailors helped workers from Edinburgh City Council to get the metropolis going again.

The military assistance was requested by the Scottish Government to help civilian authorities maintain and restore vital routes to services and ensure that the emergency services could respond to call outs.

Among those receiving assistance from the Forces were Edinburgh Royal Infirmary's Sick Children's Hospital and a medical practice in Leith.

For one member of Lusty's crew this work very close to home. Warfare officer Lt Euan Duncan hails from the city and lives in its Marchmont district... around 30 seconds' walk from where the team set to work clearing the entrance to the children's hospital.

"As soon as I heard they were looking for helpers I volunteered," said the 27-year-old.

"This is my home city and it's really nice to be able to give something back to the community where I grew up. And it made sense, too, since I had local knowledge."

In addition to the carrier sailors clearing paths, 25 musicians from the Royal Marines Band Scotland volunteered and were on standby should they be required.

Scott's the Pole star again

AS THE sun tints the horizon with a reddish-orange hue, tugs help HMS Scott down the Hamoaze at first light on a winter's morn.

And if you think it was parky when the survey ship departed Devonport, well its positively redders compared with her destination.

With HMS Endurance's fate still undetermined nearly two years after she came close to foundering in the South Atlantic, it falls to Scott to uphold the nation's long-standing commitment to scientific research and safety in the waters of the Antarctic.

Scott filled in for the Red Plum last winter (or summer as it is in the southern hemisphere), surveying 3,000 miles of uncharted ocean in the process. Her sonar scanners and hi-tech software gave scientists a unique (and rather colourful) view of what lies beneath these cold waters, including newly-discovered undersea volcanoes.

It is exactly 100 years since Capt Scott – for whom the survey vessel is named – arrived in Antarctica at the beginning of his ill-fated expedition to the South Pole.

"It could be no more fitting that HMS Scott is to conduct operations in the Antarctica in the 100th anniversary year of Captain Scott's final Antarctic expedition," said the survey ship's CO Cdr Gary Hesling.

As she did last season, the ship will provide hydrographic data for the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office to update its charts of waters becoming increasingly popular with mariners, not least 'eco-tourists' in cruise ships.

Although not technically an ice breaker, Scott can cope with ice up to 80cm (2.5ft). Her sonar wizardry is capable of surveying the deepest oceans in continuous lines of up to 400 miles in length.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, FRPU West



Montrose's parting shots

IN THE closing moments of her stint in the Somali Basin, frigate HMS Montrose cast a final blow at Somali pirates.

The ship's Lynx spied a pirate boat – which was swiftly identified as the whaler from MV Zouflecar.

Since being captured by the pirates in November, the vessel had been pressed into service as a pirate mothership.

But its days as host to a piratical horde were brought to an end by the M3M .50 calibre machine gun of Montrose's Lynx.

Cdr Jonathan Lett, Montrose's CO, said: "HMS Montrose has been patrolling off the Somali coast for some time and we know how the pirates operate.

"Our destruction of the whaler close to a known pirate camp has sent a message to the Somali pirates that NATO and other coalitions forces are willing to fight them in order to prevent them attacking merchant ships."

This was the last of a series of blows that the frigate has struck against the pirates since leaving her Plymouth home in August.

She disrupted several attacks and stripped many suspected pirates of their weapons.

In October she was called to the aid of the MV Beluga Fortune which had been attacked and boarded by pirate forces.

The Type 23 raced for more than 24 hours over a distance of 700 nautical miles to the rescue of the stricken ship – and sent her Marine-led boarding team to search the vessel.

Once checked over, the crew were given the all-clear to leave their safe-room refuge.

After three months patrolling the coast of Africa on Operation Ocean Shield Montrose turned her prow homewards, and was due back in Plymouth just days before Christmas.



Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, FRPU East

A Santastic homecoming

THE boys are back in town.

And the girls too.

All 180 of them.

Giving a big thumbs-up, the ship's company of HMS Northumberland celebrate their return to Devonport after eight months east of Suez by donning Santa hats (apart from one chap who evidently forgot his...).

It was April when the frigate last caught sight of Plymouth Hoe and Smeaton's Tower.

In the intervening eight months, the Type 23 has clocked up nearly 50,000 nautical miles – the equivalent of circling the world twice – on her mission of protecting world trade.

Northumberland was part of a multi-national task force directed from Bahrain, patrolling the sea-lanes to keep them open and safe for business.

Pirate attacks in the Middle East went down significantly thanks to the presence of Northumberland and the task group, said the frigate's CO Cdr Paddy Allen.

"I believe that the latest figures for successful piracy attacks in 2010 clearly indicate that, although we have not solved the problem, we have certainly curtailed it and made a significant difference," he added.

The frigate, with her Merlin from 829 NAS and her detachment of Royal Marines, worked mostly in the Gulf of Aden and Oman and the Somali Basin in support of Operation Calash.

Cdr Allen explained: "It's imperative that the maritime arteries which our nation is heavily reliant on remain free from illicit activity, ensuring the trade of everything from gas and oil from the Middle East to electrical goods from the Far East – something which is all-too-often taken for granted.

"This has been a hugely challenging deployment, but Northumberland, her Merlin flight and her detachment of Royal Marines can be proud of all they have achieved during a prolonged eight-month operational deployment."

Northumberland worked alongside RFA Fort Victoria (see the centre pages) and her sister HMS Montrose (above right) on counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, making life difficult for the pirates who ply their illicit trade along the 1,500-mile Somali coast and adjacent seas.



GLOBAL REACH

IX marks the spot

DIFFERENT name, same job.

2011 opens with the newest Royal Marines unit taking its place in Britain's order of battle after a formal renaming parade in Plymouth.

Gone is the (admittedly rather clunkily-titled) UK Landing Force Command Support Group (UKLF CSG).

In its place is 30 Commando IX (Information Exploitation) Group – commonly referred to as simply 30 Cdo.

Under their former and new title, the Stonehouse-based green berets use intelligence and information/psychological warfare to help 3 Cdo Bde defeat the foe.

Since it was formed in 2001, the CSG has supported the Corps on operations in Iraq and three tours of duty in Afghanistan.

The name change harks back to the earliest days of commando operations when one Ian Fleming (of James Bond fame) created 30 Commando Assault Unit to infiltrate enemy lines covertly and gather intelligence ahead of a main attack.

It saw action in North Africa, Sicily, Italy and Normandy – and some of its veterans attended the inaugural parade at Stonehouse, as did Maj Gen Buster Howes, the Corps' Commandant General.

Seven decades on from the unit's birth and the modern-day successor uses electronic warfare, intelligence, manned and unmanned aerial surveillance, information and psychological operations and communications to provide 3 Cdo Bde's CO with the information that he needs in order to make decisions in any operation.

On the ground in Afghanistan this means 30 Cdo locates the enemy, understands his complex tribal/feudal society and enable troops to take action against him.

"The men under my command are in no doubt that they make valuable contributions in support of amphibious and land operations," said 30 Cdo's CO Lt Col Matt Stovin-Bradford.

"However, a change of name hardens an already galvanised group of specialists whose principal function on operations is to develop our force's understanding of the environment and adversaries through analysis and reconnaissance; which in turn is used to inform decision makers at every level.

"The role we perform can be traced back to World War 2, a lineage of which we are immensely proud and is now reflected in our new title."



● *A BV rolls ashore from an LCVP at Wilsons Beach in Devonport, with HMS Ocean berthed at Weston Mill Lake jetty in the background* Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford, FRPU West

Landing room only

IF YOU'RE stuck in Devonport and looking to broaden your horizons, then why not head to Wilsons Beach?

Sounds exotic (well, ish). Maldives? Bora Bora? Honolulu?

Nope, about 200 yards from the end of Weston Mill Lake jetty. It's only about 500ft long. And it's very muddy.

So not very exotic, then. But it is very useful if you're a rookie landing craft coxswain, as the latest batch of trainees to pass through 1 Assault Group Royal Marines discovered during Exercise Broad Horizon.

The exercise is the final test for Royal Marines who've volunteered for the landing craft specialisation; they've undergone 14 weeks of instruction courtesy of the Devonport-based assault group ahead of the eight-day assessment.

The latest Broad Horizon – one of three staged each year – proved to be the largest to date with around 100 troops and 20 landing craft committed in and around Devonport.

As well as the rookies from 10 Training Squadron RM, the latest manoeuvres also involved 4 Assault Squadron RM, HMS Bulwark's dedicated commando unit.

For them the exercise was the chance to shake off some cobwebs; the ship's in the final stages of a refit in Devonport before taking over from her sister Albion as amphibious flagship in 2011.

Using landing support ship RFA Largs Bay as their 'mother ship', the culminating exercise sees potential coxswains use the waters around Devonport, Plymouth Sound and the Tamar to practise all aspects of landing craft operations – in all types of craft, from the large LCUs which can carry Challenger 2 tanks to smaller, more agile craft that can achieve speeds in excess of 35 knots.

Broad Horizon tests the trainees in the gamut of landing craft operations, from the basic of navigation to off-loading vehicles, river patrols, beach reconnaissance, and amphibious troop training... and the ability to fend off enemy attacks.

"For eight days the men being assessed will be expected to coxswain their craft by day and night, with minimal rest and always under the threat of possible enemy attack," explained Maj Jim Fuller, Officer Commanding 10 (LC) Training Squadron.

"The Royal Marines are the UK's amphibious experts and while we are committed to current operations in Afghanistan, it is also essential that we maintain our skills and knowledge of how to live, work and fight from landing craft – which is what Broad Horizon is designed to do."

■ A NEW refit facility for the 23 Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel (LCVP) in the RN/RM order of battle has been opened in Devonport.

The building allows up to five LCVPs to be overhauled at any one time – indoors.

Until now, the craft have been maintained outside, or under makeshift shelters – all dependent on the weather.

Now the craft can be hauled out of the water and moved to the new refit hall on a specially-built wheeled transporter.

It will be used by all RM amphibious units in the Plymouth area – 1AGRM, 539 Assault Squdron RM, 4, 6, and 9 ASRM (attached to HM Ships Bulwark, Albion and Ocean respectively) – plus units from RM Poole and RM Instow.

The joint Babcock Marine-MOD facility – renovated and kitted out over the past 12 months – was opened by the Commandant General Royal Marines Maj Gen Buster Howes who said the complex represented "a big commitment to support amphibious forces".

Baggers are 'choking the insurgents'

ONE group of Baggers has traded places with another as 854 NAS takes over the vital surveillance mission in Afghan skies from her Culdrose sister squadron 857.

The two formations take it in turns to provide airborne intelligence to Allied units, courtesy of the Sea King Mk7 Airborne Surveillance and Control helicopters – Baggers in everyday RN parlance thanks to the big black 'sack' which contains the Searchwater radar.

The ASaCs, which entered service in 2002, were designed to provide Airborne Early Warning for the Fleet.

But the radar also proved potent in tracking movements on the ground – and was used to that effect in Iraq in 2003.

And for the past two years the Baggers have been doing the same over Afghanistan, collecting valuable intelligence which is then fed to headquarters allowing the intelligence analysts to build the 'pattern of life' picture in Helmand province.

Throughout its stint in theatre, 857 NAS maintained a high serviceability rate – the normal risk of corrosion from salt water was replaced by the challenge of operating veteran helicopters in the hot and dusty conditions of Helmand.

"Operating a long way from the sea, this maritime helicopter has proven to be a tremendous success in helping to stop the flow of drugs and Improvised Explosive Device components around Helmand," said 857's CO Lt Cdr Geoff Hayward

"The helicopter's state-of-the-art surveillance radar has provided essential coverage in helping to choke insurgent supplies.

"The Sea King has been a key contributory factor in protecting Afghan civilians and coalition troops from the effect of IEDs by assisting in the reduction of availability of the materials to build these lethal devices."

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Saying cooey to the QE

OK, we'll state the obvious right away.

This picture's *quite* dark. Very dark, actually.

But (a) it was the middle of the night. And (b) a snowstorm was raging.

Nevertheless, in the gloom the ship's name is quite clear – not the aircraft carrier, but the new cruise liner, the 92,000-ton Cunarder – and there's a handful of people on her upper deck.

As we're not *Cruise Ship News*, you might be wondering why we're featuring this merchant leviathan.

Well, the photograph was taken from HMS Campbeltown in the Channel as the QE returned from her inaugural visit to France (Cherbourg).

As Campbeltown neared the rendezvous point the blizzard seemed to reach a crescendo and the Queen Elizabeth took on the appearance of a ghost ship as her lights could be glimpsed only fleetingly through the snow.

When the two ships closed, brave passengers weathered the conditions and ventured on to the liner's upper deck to wave at Campbeltown.

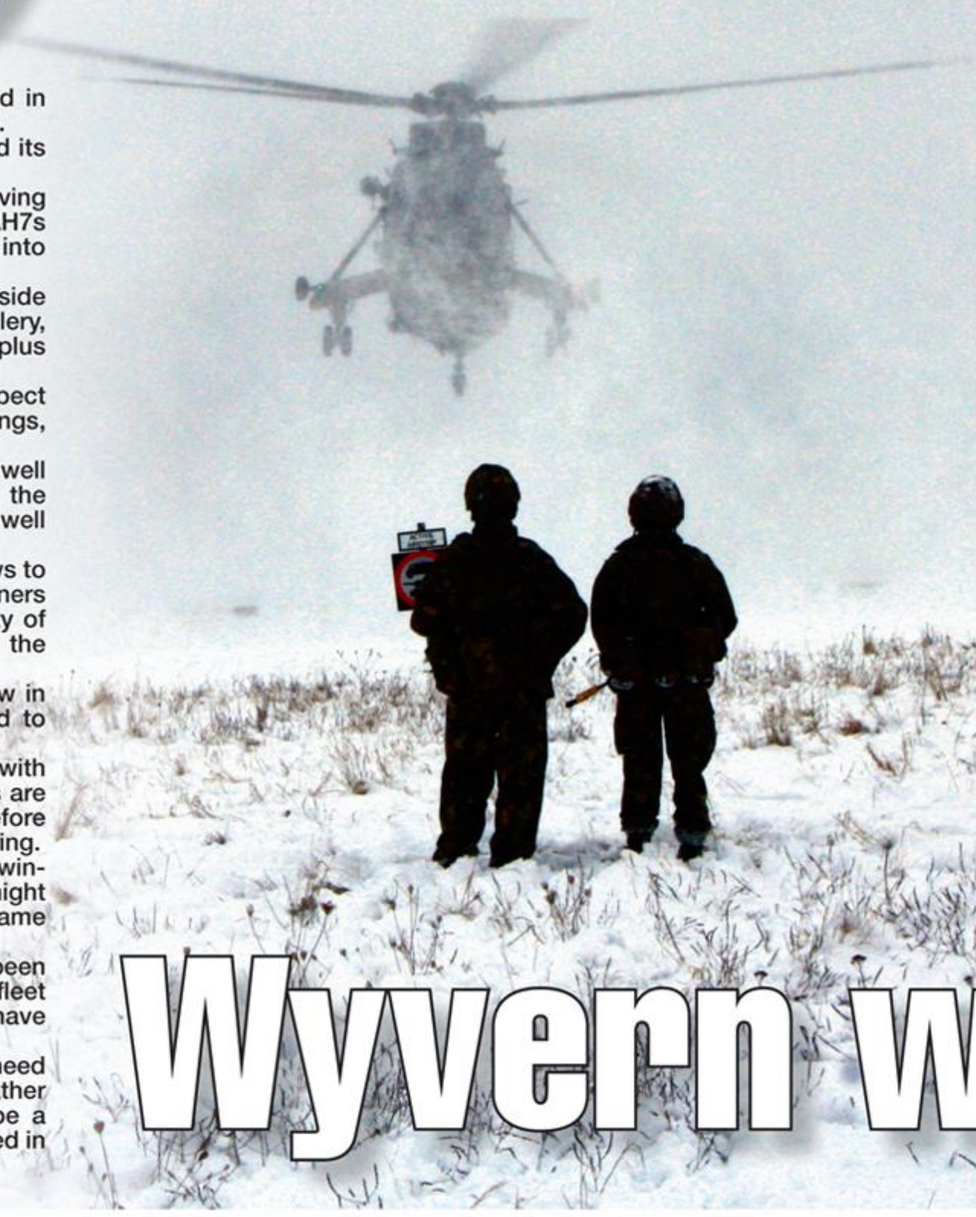
On board the cruise ship was Cdre Jamie Miller Royal Navy, the Naval Regional Commander for Wales and Western England; his commodore's pennant was flying from the ship, so an 11-gun salute was appropriate and Campbeltown did the honours.

The Type 22's sailors worked hard in very challenging conditions to ensure that all was in place for a right and proper salute as the two ships positioned for a sail past.

So, in the middle of the Channel, on a dark and stormy night, the sound of 11 crisp bangs rang out. The Queen Elizabeth sounded her sirens in reply and the two ships went about their business. Within minutes they could no longer see each other through the snow and the only sound that could be heard was the howling wind.

The liner's Master, Capt Chris Wells (a Royal Navy reservist – *see page 29*), sent a message of thanks to Campbeltown's CO Cdr Keri Harris for the display his frigate put on:

"Many thanks for your splendid show, complete with high speed passes, 'destroyer' turns, and all the bangs. You looked every bit the ocean greyhound, whereas we hopefully just looked 'majestic'!"



Wyvern whiteout

ONLY mad dogs and Englishmen venture out in the mid-day sun.

And only commandos venture out when it's Baltic.

Commando Helicopter Force, that is, who weren't going to be put off because it was a tad chilly.

Some 120 RN and RM personnel decamped from CHF's home at Yeovilton to Salisbury Plain for a week of cold weather training alongside the Army.

Actually, Exercise Wyvern Warrior was designed to test the ability of the helicopter force – which is heavily in demand in Afghanistan presently – to operate 'over the horizon', ie far from base.

And as it happened, Wyvern Warrior began just as the UK endured its coldest November snap in 17 years.

It was also one of the largest CHF exercises for many years involving Jungly Sea Kings from 846 and 848 Naval Air Squadrons plus Lynx AH7s of 847 NAS. For good measure, Army Air Corps Apaches were thrown into the mix.

The week-long 'workout' also allowed CHF personnel to train alongside troops from 4 Rifles, 3 Yorkshire Regiment, 19 Regiment Royal Artillery, 3 Logistic Support Regiment, 21 Signals and the Household Cavalry plus units from 1 and 3 Brigades.

The CHF chaps and chapesses flew the gamut of missions you'd expect them to carry out: troop movements and load lifting for the Sea Kings, surveillance and reconnaissance for the Lynx, by day and night.

As for the unexpectedly early snowfall and bitter temperatures, well CHF had 40 years of experience of Arctic operations to call upon; the force regularly heads to the Royal Norwegian Air Station Bardufoss – well inside the Arctic Circle – to top-up cold weather expertise.

For Jungly training squadron 848 NAS Wyvern Warrior allowed crews to practise final tactical training; a trainee Sea King aircrew and maintainers operate their aircraft from a tactical location and undertake a variety of missions by both day and night before joining either 845 or 846 in the front-line...

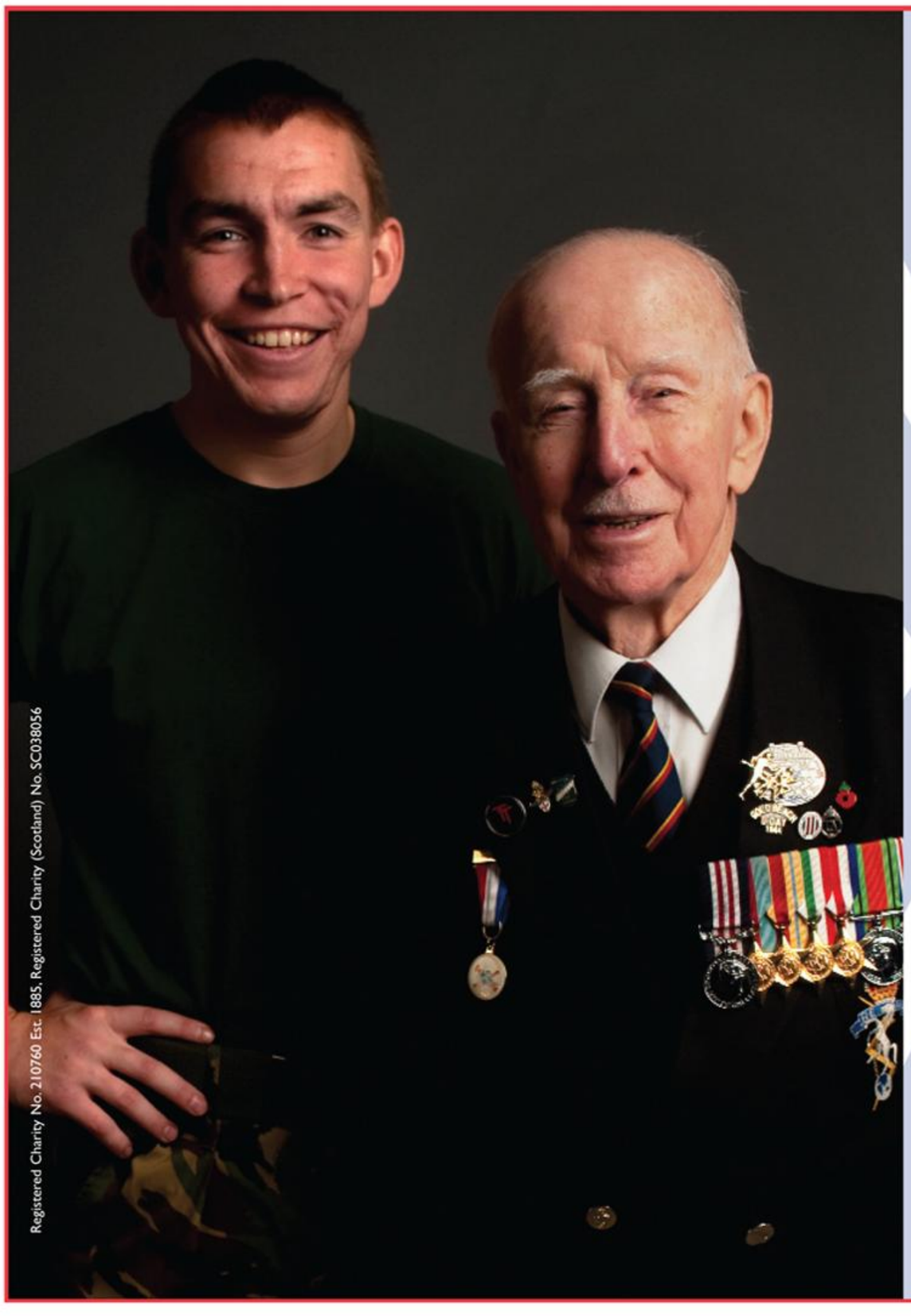
...which won't be long. For this month CHF fliers and ground crew in Blighty will either be heading to Afghanistan, or preparing to head to Afghanistan.

847 fly into theatre to join elements of 845 and 846 already working with Allied forces, while the remaining 845/846 personnel and helicopters are conducting pre-deployment exercises with 3 Commando Brigade before the latter takes over as the lead British force in Helmand later this spring.

For CHF's CO Capt Jon Pentreath Wyvern Warrior proved to be a 'win-win': it tested his force's ability to operate in harsh conditions they might expect in Helmand (temperatures there dip to -15°C in winter) at the same time as their ability to operate 'over the horizon'.

With the helicopters heavily committed in Afghanistan, there's been relatively few opportunities to exercise at sea with the amphibious fleet – although recent exercises involving HMS Ocean and HMS Albion have gone some way towards 'regenerating' this vital skill.

"To ensure CHF personnel are trained for all environments, they need to operate in cold temperatures as well as hot, and the sub-zero weather conditions on Salisbury Plain during Wyvern Warrior proved to be a bonus not only for the littoral environment but also for that encountered in Afghanistan," Capt Pentreath added.



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Commcen closes all circuits

AND so another treasured slice of Naval history is no more.

With the signal CM1 Desig All – 'I am closing down on all circuits' – 140 years of signalling from the Rock came to an end and Gibraltar's communications centre closed down.

It fell to Gibraltar's Chief-of-Staff, Col Jim Mitchell, to issue the final signal, and AB Luke Gough – the youngest member of the five-strong RN team – to transmit it around the globe.

The comms centre traces its roots back to 1870 when the Falmouth, Gibraltar and Malta Telegraph Company laid a submarine cable, establishing a permanent link with the UK, which the Admiralty quickly utilised, sending comms specialists to man the new centre.

By World War 1 cable was complemented by wireless and 'aerial farms' sprouted on the upper Rock while a formal Naval Communications Centre was established in Admiralty Tunnel.

A generation later and another war saw Gibraltar become the eye of the Mediterranean hurricane, with a tri-Service team manning circuits round the clock to deal with operations in North Africa and the Western Mediterranean.

That joint nature of the base (reflected in the Joint Operational Communications Centre title) persisted post-war as Gib maintained its strategic position.

At the peak of operations 150 Servicemen and women served at Commcen Gibraltar, but technology and automation saw personnel numbers fall, such that by 2008 it had moved to the Tower, the HQ of British Forces in Gib.

Now, with a team of just five RN comms staff, the decision has been taken to relocate to Faslane.

A rum barrel was hauled out to mark the occasion, with former Officer in Charge Lt Cdr Geoff Alexander raising a toast to communicators past and present.

"From submarine telegraph, through wireless and radio to computer-controlled automated digital systems, Royal Naval communications staff have maintained a constant watch," said Col Mitchell.

"They have provided the Admiralty, Flag Officers and commanders with the highest standard of military communications.

"We salute the passing of the Communications Centre."



● HMS Kent in Rosyth

Kent on Kent, SNO on snow

BEAR with us – this might get confusing...

Pictured above is HMS Kent. Pictured right is Kent, and it also depicts SNO on snow.

So what we had in Rosyth was SNO on snow, Kent on Kent, Kent on snow on Kent or SNO on snow on Kent.

Or any other combination, really. Let us explain.

HMS Kent is in the capable hands of Babcock, who are starting an extensive refit of the frigate.

While in refit, her Commanding Officer is actually the Senior Naval Officer (SNO) on board – in this case the Marine Engineer Officer, Lt Cdr Matt Kent.

Now, in days of yore admirals would have referred to such a ship as 'the Kent', and her CO as simply 'Kent'.

So when the yard on the Forth was hit by the cold snap at the end of last year, she had snow on her decks – hence the snow/SNO Kent/Kent tomfoolery.

"As you can imagine, my surname has caused a few raised eyebrows, particularly amongst our visitors during numerous capability demonstrations conducted during the past year," said Lt Cdr Kent.

One visitor was Princess Beatrice, who wondered how one got a ship named after oneself – particularly as her aunt, the Countess of Wessex (also present), is the sponsor of HMS Daring.

The SNO also mentioned that the frigate visited her 'home county' last September, "which meant Kent on Kent in Kent..."

Babcock's £20m refit programme includes the fitting of Sonar 2087, a Mk 8 Mod 1 4.5in gun replacement, an uprated command system, the Seawolf Mid-Life Upgrade, the installation of a new IT system, automatic 30mm guns and new gas turbines, as well as work on the living spaces, galley and air-conditioning.

There will also be routine maintenance of equipment, repairs and renewal of hull coatings.

Throughout the period the ship is run by 41 personnel, mainly engineers with a handful of logisticians and seaman specialists.

The ship's company should move back on board in August with a view to leaving Rosyth late this year.



BRNC forges Chinese link

CDRE Jake Moores, the Commodore BRNC, spent a week in China on a formal fact-finding visit looking at naval training in the country.

On the commodore's agenda were visits to the People's Liberation Army (Navy) HQ in Beijing, the Dahlian Naval Academy and the Naval Engineering University at Wuhan.

The Dahlian Academy has around 1,000 midshipmen training in the warfare specialisation, while a similar number of engineering students attend the Wuhan facility.

"During this official visit to China I was struck by the warmth of hospitality and openness between our two navies," said Cdre Moores. "This visit was mutually beneficial and will hopefully lead to a stronger link between BRNC and the Dahlian Academy."

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Picture: LA(Phot) Tel Boughton, FRPU East

Edinburgh goes Dutch

WITH the weak autumn sun glinting off the clouds, HMS Edinburgh edges out of a basin in Holland's principal naval base.

Den Helder was the first foreign port of call for the Fortress of the Sea since her £17.5m revamp and recommissioning.

The veteran destroyer is in the middle of an intense period of work-up, ahead of the acid test – Basic Operational Sea Training, beginning this month.

Den Helder is the home of the Dutch Fleet (on the left of the photograph is one of the Netherlands' Rotterdam-class assault ships – progenitors of the Bay-class vessels of the RFA).

Given the long-standing bond between the two nations and navies, the Dutch proved to be fine hosts for Edinburgh's sailors, including challenging their visitors to a rugby league match – except that Edinburgh didn't have a team; PO Stu Copeland had to rustle up a side.

For a XIII which had never trained together, let alone played together, the Brits didn't fare too badly (but they did lose).

Barely an hour away from Den Helder is the Dutch capital; in the suburb of Watergraafsmeer can be found the vast Nieuwe Ooster Begraafplaats – New Eastern Cemetery – where more than 300 Britons are remembered for their efforts to liberate the Netherlands from the Nazis in World War 2.

A detachment from Edinburgh paid its respects at the small Commonwealth War Graves section of the cemetery.

They were joined for Armistice Day commemorations by children from the British School of Amsterdam, who sang hymns and watched a flypast by vintage aircraft.

It was, said CO Cdr Paul Russell, "a very moving" experience.

Are there any takers for the new P Squadron?

PROTECTION with a capital P – that is the offering from the Royal Navy's newest squadron.

P Squadron 'belongs' to the Fleet Protection Group RM at Faslane, and provides force protection teams for RFAs, strategic roll-on roll-off ferries (SRRs), minehunters and survey vessels (SVs) operating in high-threat areas.

Until September RFAs and SRRs were protected by squads of RN augmentees or reservists, while mine countermeasures vessels (MCMVs) and SVs provided their own protection.

But on September 1 P Sqn assumed that responsibility.

With a strength of 145, the squadron is designed to generate 11 12-strong teams, although currently they range in size from six, led by Leading Hands, to 13, led by Senior Rates.

The squadron is now seeking high-calibre individuals keen to take on a second career strand in parallel to their branch progress.

According to Lt Cdr Rich Witte, the first Officer Commanding: "For those who wish to develop or improve their leadership and military skills there are huge advantages in joining P Squadron.

"The aspiration is that the squadron will be recognised as being manned only by those individuals who have the intellect, physical fitness, leadership and 'grit' to deserve early recognition for promotion.

"As the squadron matures, there will be scope to release individuals for professional leadership training, adventurous training and military training with the Royal Marines, with the aim being to deliver back to the Fleet a more rounded and capable Serviceman who can be trusted to lead and fight."

The squadron, said Lt Cdr Witte, is essentially no different to a ship's company.

"It requires volunteers from AB1 to WO1 and suitably experienced lieutenants to be troop commanders for troops of 44 personnel," he said.

"The troop commanders are essentially heads of departments, troop senior ratings are DEPCOs and junior ratings work the various commitments, be they RFAs, RRs, MCMVs or SVs."

The need to chop and change between types of ship – and particularly for service on small ships – means certain factors have to be considered, including fitness and susceptibility to chronic seasickness; levels of maturity, confidence and other qualities expected of an individual in the next highest rate; good disciplinary record; and freedom from significant welfare or Divisional issues that will prevent an individual from deploying.

Training covers three phases:

Stage 1 is FOST-delivered individual training at Collingwood and Raleigh; ABs have nine weeks of team member training with rifles, machine guns and Miniguns; leading hands also train on these weapons as team leaders, and learn to plan training and manage trauma, risk and incidents.

Senior rates will complete the same training, and also learn Divisional Officer skills.

Stage 2 is largely FOST-delivered platform familiarisation.

Stage 3 takes place once deployed and is planned and conducted by team commanders.

A typical deployment cycle over an 18-month assignment could include: An initial two months integrating with FPGRM; three separate month-long sessions on live firings and pre-deployment training (OST and Joint Warrior) spread throughout the assignment; four months deployed to an RFA; three months at R1 readiness – 24 hours notice to move from the UK – to support MCMV operations; two month-long sessions of leave, adventurous training and RM military training; two months deployed to an SRR and a final two months of professional courses prior to return to branch.

Lt Cdr Witte said the opportunities to broaden their professional experience over a range of ships and tasks, to attain a high level of fitness and to get practical leadership experience means they will return to their branch "more confident, more experienced and more employable."

He added: "For those who enjoy the 'green' aspects of training, opportunities will be made for them to go for Royal Marines and Specialist selection."

Anyone interested should approach their Divisional Officer in the first instance, and further details will be available in a DIN to be issued early this year.



New Iron age dawns

THIS impressive sight means two things:

1. The WEO is happy because Seawolf has successfully left its silo.

2. The ship's about to deploy.

In this case, the ship is HMS Iron Duke. And the deployment is east of Suez.

Now this is, we're told, the Portsmouth frigate's very first appearance east of the great man-made waterway in her two-decade career – extremely unusual as the Type 23s rarely go anywhere other than the Gulf or Indian Ocean.

Structural issues with Iron Duke meant that she's typically deployed either to the North Atlantic or the South.

As they've now been fixed, it means that she can head for the Gulf.

Which is exactly what she'll be doing later this month to take over Operation Telic duties from HMS Cumberland.

After a significant maintenance package over the summer, Iron Duke spent the autumn conducting trials and training in preparation for her deployment.

One of the highlights was her Seawolf shoot; it's a pre-requisite for a 23 about to deploy that her main air defence system is working.

In a tense week in the South Coast Exercise areas, plagued by the usual suspects of shipping and bad weather, the frigate completed last-minute Seawolf tests and trials before two successful firings.

After that it was time to get acquainted with the ship's flight and their Lynx Mk 8 helicopter. 228 flight will serve as part of Iron Duke's ship's company until the return from deployment.

With propulsion, aviation, weapon and sensor systems proved, focus turned to training.

A week helping the students of PWO Course 162 provided a warm up to the main event – DCT.

Directed Continuation Training is bespoke training for a ship, adapted to meet the needs of its impending deployment and provided by those nice folk at FOST.

Having completed a six-week package of Operational Sea Training in June, most of the Iron Ducks knew what to expect from the FOSTies.

However the familiar two weeks of core warfare and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Damage Control was followed by something new for the ship – Telic mission rehearsal.

Over a week, the sailors practised drills many new drills: defending oil platforms; protecting the ship against Fast Attack Craft; transiting choke points such as the Straits of Hormuz; and conducting boarding operations with the recently-embarked Royal Marines team from FPGRM.

While Iron Duke has a lot of experience – and success – at counter-narcotics boardings, preparations for the higher- threat environment of the Gulf resulted in many lessons and quite a bit of fine tuning under the guiding hand of FOST staff.

"The ship's company has worked hard to get her ready for deployment," said CO Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest.

"Now we're looking forward to getting into theatre and getting on with our operational business."



'The best of the UK'

ESCORTED by an Offshore Raiding Craft of the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines, the nation's ultimate weapon returns home from patrol to the Clyde.

But we're more interested in the futuristic grey outline on the left of CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald's rather imposing photograph – Her Majesty's Ship Dragon – than ballistic missile submarine HMS Vanguard.

The fourth ship in the £6bn Type 45 programme is also making her way home after four weeks of "very successful" initial sea trials off the Scottish West Coast.

A mixed civilian-RN crew took charge of the destroyer for her first spell at sea – the ship is still officially in the hands of her builder, BAE Systems.

Dragon is the first of the 'Batch 2' Type 45s to put to sea (there are subtle differences between the initial three destroyers, Daring, Dauntless and Diamond, and the remainder of the sextet, Dragon, Defender and Duncan).

Her successful trials effectively brought the curtain down on a year when, says the Type 45 project's leader, Cdre Steve Brunton, the class "arrived".

He added: "We've achieved everything we set out to achieve in 2010. It's probably been the busiest year to date for the programme."

All six ships are now in the water. Three Type 45s are in RN hands (Daring, Dauntless and Diamond), two in service (Daring and Dauntless), one has passed through OST and conducted its first overseas exercise (Daring) and the Sea Viper main armament has been successfully fired (Dauntless).

By the end of this year, Daring and Dauntless will either have deployed or be on deployment for the first time, while Diamond will be in commission, while the ships they replace – the venerable Type 42s – will be increasingly phased out.

Manchester pays off next month, followed by the Fighting G in June. The very last 42, HMS Edinburgh, will bow out in 2013 when HMS Duncan enters service.

Between now and then, says Cdre Brunton, there is still a lot of work to do on the Darings.

The class has not been without its issues – the ships feature 80 per cent technology which is new to the Senior Service.

But with the arrival of each vessel, the problems are becoming fewer and fewer. Dauntless had half the issues that Daring suffered from to begin with, and Diamond half the number of problems again.

"The Type 45s are not without problems – but then we don't build prototypes. We build the first ship and we try to make it work first time," the commodore added.

"A lot of the 'newness' has caused the challenges, but there's an industrial base of 4,000 people working on the project, a 59-strong team at Abbey Wood, plus the ship's companies."

Daring is currently undergoing a mini overhaul which among other upgrades will see her fitted with Phalanx automated guns. After more trials and training she's earmarked to deploy for the first time.

Although the class was designed to provide task group air defence protection – and Daring's recent exercises with the USS Enterprise has more than proved the 45s can do it – the £1bn destroyers should not be seen as one-trick ponies.

"Because the Type 45s are big, one key message to get across is that there is more to them than Sea Viper: they have a large flight deck, a lot of accommodation space for up to 60 Royal Marines. They are extremely versatile ships," Cdre Brunton added.

He continued: "The message about Type 45 is that it is a success story.

"The ships are generation-changing technology. With the future carrier and the Type 26 frigates, they'll change the way we do business.

"They are the ideal platforms to show off the best of the UK, the best of industry and the best of the Royal Navy – these ships are the future heart of the Navy."

Busy waters for trainees

ROOKIE warfare officers spent a week at sea off the Isle of Wight as they got to grips with the basics of their chosen branch.

Students on the Initial Warfare Officer Foundation course joined P2000s HMS Raider and Blazer for a series of manoeuvres in the busy waters of the Solent .

The 14-week course, run by Dartmouth, marks the start of professional training for newly-promoted warfare officers.

After time on the bridge trainer at BRNC, the officers grab hands-on experience courtesy of the URNU boats.

The programme including pilotage, coastal navigation and Officer of the Watch manoeuvres and berthing practice.

The busy waters off Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight were made more challenging by the less-than-clement autumn weather which veered between brilliant sunshine and mist and fog which reduced visibility to under 400 yards.

The trainees found themselves negotiating the patrol boats among sizeable transporters, ferries, yachts, the Southsea-Ryde hovercraft and the occasional RNLI boat.

Due Diligence

A CHANGE is as good as a rest.

Just ask RFA Diligence.

After more than two years in the Gulf region largely serving as a floating workshop for Allied warships, the repair ship was pressed into front-line duties.

The auxiliary took her place in the line with other international warships currently assigned to Combined Task Force 150.

The group is one of the longest-standing naval forces in the region, formed in the wake of the September 11 atrocities to stop illegal activity in waters east of Suez.

The force spreads its vessels across more than two million square miles of ocean – the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman.

In this instance, 150's CO Cdre Greg Sammut RAN charged the RFA with surveillance and reconnaissance of various vessels of interest, as well as helping to compile a 'pattern of life' of movements on the high seas, from the benign (merchantmen and fishermen plying their lawful trade) to potentially-suspicious activity.

Diligence also worked closely alongside another 150 warships including US destroyer Winston S Churchill, Pakistani frigate PNS Khaibar (formerly HMS Arrow) and France's FS Commadante Bouan.

Working with these Allied vessels, Diligence played the part of a suspect ship for boarding teams to search.

By way of appreciation, each ship offered Diligence the opportunity to 'cross deck' enabling RFA personnel to spend time aboard a foreign warship, sharing experiences with counterparts.

"Diligence is first and foremost a repair ship – her workshops and maintenance facilities help sustain the worldwide reach of the Royal Navy," said Capt Philip Hanton RFA, Diligence's CO.

"But the RFA is nothing if it is not versatile."



● *Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar chats with one of Pembroke's divers about working in the challenging Gulf conditions*

Four by two equals eight

HARSH environment, high tempo.

It doesn't come much tougher in skimmer world in peacetime than an eight-month slog in the Gulf (during the hottest period of the year) with a punishing schedule to maintain.

Ask Mine Counter-Measures Crew 4, who are now relaxing back in Blighty after two-thirds of a year aboard HMS Pembroke in Bahrain.

Lest anyone think that the Gulf might become a backwater with the continued emphasis on Afghanistan and the current major effort against pirates off the Horn of Africa, well the Sandown crews would beg to differ.

The latest 'inhabitants' of Pembroke, Sandown Crew 4, steamed 8,300 nautical miles, conducted over 300 diving serials, and carried out 360 mine disposal training missions using their Seafox remote-controlled submersible during their 248-day stint in Bahrain.

"The crew should be very proud of all they have achieved," said Lt Cdr Sarah West of the 34 sailors under her command.

"I am very proud of the way they have performed and maintained full operational readiness and capability, despite the harsh environment and high tempo.

"The past eight months with HMS Pembroke in the Arabian Gulf have been exciting, challenging and extremely busy for Crew 4."

The commander of the four-strong RN mine counter-measures force in the Gulf, Cdr John Craig, said that the experience gained by the long-standing commitment to keep the group in Bahrain was really showing.

"By now you would think I'd seen it all, but every time I deploy to the Gulf I see yet another improvement that reminds me how far we've come over the past four years," he added.

"Having spent more than thirty months in the Gulf in the last four years alone, I have been consistently impressed by the proud fighting spirit of my crews, the first-class availability of the world-leading minehunting equipment fitted, and the tried-and-tested support organisation that keeps the ships at sea."

As well as operations and exercises at sea, Pembroke kept up a demanding physical fitness regime.

At the start of the deployment Lt Cdr West challenged a number of the ship's company to run the Bahrain half marathon as a fitness goal and test of team spirit.

The race was held early in the morning to avoid the worst of the Bahrain heat and traffic and all 20 sailors who accepted the challenge completed the course, with eight of the Pembrokes finishing in under two hours.

Before departing for the UK, Crew 4 also hosted a group of Chelsea Pensioners, then joined the veterans for a service of remembrance at the Old Christian Cemetery in Manama, the Bahraini capital.

Responsibility for Pembroke now rests on the shoulders of Crew 2, who headed to the Gulf immediately after handing over the keys to the recently-decommissioned HMS Walney in Portsmouth Naval Base.

"These will be big boots to fill, but I have every confidence my team will do themselves and Pembroke proud," said new CO Lt Cdr Angus Essenhigh.

"My crew's arrived in theatre trained, motivated and ready to carry on the excellent work undertaken by Crew 4."

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Pictures: Lockheed Martin

Pax Britannica

THIS is a fixed-wing jet.

With N A V Y emblazoned on its fuselage – and to British naval aviators that's a rare sight these days.

In what's been a very bitter few weeks for the zoomies, here's the one glimmer of hope: the F35 Joint Strike Fighter.

This is the very first naval variant of Britain's future carrier jet, the F35C, making its debut at 'Pax' River, the US Navy's test flight school outside Washington DC.

Although this first carrier JSF will be flown by the US Navy – the man at the controls here is called Nelson, 'Doc' Nelson – there's already a seven-strong RN team working behind the scenes to ensure the multi-billion-dollar project is a success.

They had been working on the jump jet version of the JSF, the F35B – there are four jets undergoing tests and evaluation at Naval Air Station Patuxent, aka 'Pax', River in Maryland.

In the wake of October's Strategic Defence Review, the UK pulled the plug on the B and plumped for a return to traditional carrier operations by buying the Model C instead – it's cheaper, has a greater range and a bigger payload, but it does require a return to 'cats and traps' for the first time since Ark Royal was in service (that's the *old* Ark Royal, No.4 of *Sailor* fame, not the recently-decommissioned No.5).

While Britain's future carrier design team is working on fitting catapults and arrestor wires to the two 65,000-ton leviathans under construction (HM Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales) the seven RN personnel at Pax are getting to grips with the technology behind the Joint Strike Fighter.

The F35 – also known as the Lightning II – will be the world's first fifth-generation fighter (Meteors and Me262s are 'first generation'; the Harrier is 'third generation') which means massive changes for ground and air crew.

A small UK team – RN, RAF and civilians – is working alongside US colleagues to help the development and testing of the JSF at Pax River.



● *Pax men... Six of the seven-strong RN team at Pax River standing in front of a Joint Strike Fighter; (l-r) Lt Cdr Paul Holden, PO Mike Eland, CPO Yuki Ho, Cdr Bow Wheaton, PO Junior Cavan and WO Rik Lydall (the seventh man, PO Gary Lister, is not in the picture)*



F35C CV

Engine: Pratt & Whitney F135 afterburning turbofan generating 28,000lb thrust (43,000lb with afterburner)
Wing Span: 43ft
Length: 51½ft
Speed: Mach 1.6 (1,228mph)
Crew: one pilot
Range: 1,200 nautical miles
Combat radius: 640 nautical miles
Payload: 18,000lbs

In total, there are 450 people swarming over the five JSFs now at the US naval air station, putting in six-day weeks to push the programme along.

"Very few UK military personnel have any experience in developing, testing and the initial operation of a new fighter," explained Cdr Bow Wheaton, the UK Technical Lead with the Integrated Test Force at Pax.

"The knowledge and experience gained by the team will be invaluable when we stand up our own JSF operating facility in a few years."

The jump jet variant of the strike fighter proved to be a huge engineering challenge – requiring a lot of unplanned maintenance.

But what's caught the eye of the RN team in Maryland is the international effort which has rallied to tackle the problems thrown up.

"The truly impressive aspect is the size of the effort and resources made available to sort problems and redesign components and software when it's required," said Cdr Wheaton.

For the maintainers in his team, there was a six-week JSF technical factory course to learn about the aircraft, then another course to get to grips with the strike fighter's Pratt and Whitney engine, before finally grappling with the test model aircraft in the hangar at Pax.

And there's a lot to grapple with...

"The past few months have been very, very busy," said PO Junior Cavan.

"As a 'grubber' I have had an exceedingly steep learning curve, gaining knowledge about an aircraft which is effectively a flying computer.

"Honestly, the only task I can think of that isn't monitored or forecast by the aircraft computers is tyre wear, and I'm sure they have plans for that!"

At present the work purely revolves around the F35 as an aircraft – learning how to look after the aircraft, fix problems, carry out routine maintenance.

It is, says Cdr Wheaton, a "time-consuming and expensive" process, but laying this groundwork now is vital to smooth the way for the JSF into service.

Once all the engineering has been worked out and the pilots are happy, the next step is to move on to combat trials: testing the defensive and offensive mission systems and weaponry.

"The UK team will be fully involved in this phase as well, ensuring that we get a carrier-based aircraft that is fit for purpose and that can work alongside other UK capabilities, like Typhoon and our own air-to-air refueling aircraft," Cdr Wheaton added.

"Over the next few years the ITF's Royal Naval contingent will have a pivotal role in creating, developing and verifying the maintenance procedures and practices used to operate the JSF ashore, embarked and in all climatic conditions."









Last sight of home

IF EVER there's a moment to bring one of Britain's busiest airfields to a grinding halt it is this.

Flying low over RNAS Yeovilton this was the last time anyone there would see naval aviators from a naval air squadron flying a jet for a decade.

The Harriers of 800 Naval Air Squadron – which only recently stood-up again after a lengthy absence – paid a farewell visit to the Somerset air station.

For a quarter of the century, as far as any naval aviator was concerned, Yeovilton was 'home of the Harrier' (a tag it only lost when the Fleet Air Arm fliers moved in with the RAF in Cottesmore and Wittering a few years ago).

Four jets – three GR9s, one two-seat trainer – touched down on the hallowed Yeovilton tarmac, their pilots bade farewell to long-standing comrades in arms, then climbed back into their cockpits to perform two trademark manoeuvres – the 360-degree 'pirouette' followed by a bow to the control tower.

Watching was Cdr Danny Stembridge – Yeovilton's Executive Officer and the man earmarked to take over 800 NAS until the jump jets were axed under October's defence review.

"I've spent the last 20 years flying, predominantly from the sea," he said. "To think that for the first time in 100 years we are not going to be able to do that is sad. The country is losing its ability to project air power at a time and place of its choosing."

The Harrier fleet is being retired seven years ahead of schedule; its successor, the Joint Strike Fighter, won't appear on the scene till the end of the decade – although the carriers they will operate from, HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, are due to enter service from the middle of the decade.

"The Fleet Air Arm has overcome difficulties in the past and risen to the challenges, and we will do it again with the Joint Strike Fighter," said 800's final CO Cdr Dave 'Tinsel' Lindsay.

As a Harrier man through-and-through, the last appearance on 'home turf' left him distinctly moved.

"Today is very emotional – Yeovilton is our spiritual homeland. The Harrier is an iconic aircraft. It can be a real handful sometimes but it is a pilot's aircraft. No other aircraft can do what it can do."

His squadron is due to make its final flight next month before formally decommissioning in the new year.

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherstone, RNAS Yeovilton

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CLASSIC SHIPS of the ROYAL NAVY No. 1

'Every shot is telling'

THE word means unbeatable, but ships bearing the name HMS Invincible have rarely lived up to it.

Invincible No.1: sank in the Solent. No.2: wrecked off Norfolk. No.3: brief career in the Napoleonic Wars, then served as a hulk. No.4: sank in a storm.

As for Invincible No.5, her fate is the most chilling of all. Her demise provides us with the definitive image of the greatest clash of warships ever witnessed in European waters: Jutland.

At 6.34pm on Wednesday May 31 1916, the fifth Invincible was simply torn apart by a cataclysmic explosion which left all who saw it at once shocked and awestruck. When the tongues of flame died out and the smoke cleared, all that was left of the flagship of 3rd Battle-cruiser Squadron were her bow and stern, raised out of the water in a V-shape "like two large tombstones suddenly raised in honour".

But beyond this haunting image there is a brief but glorious story that day. For until that calamitous explosion, the battle-cruiser fought as well as any British warship that Wednesday.

In a devastating eight-minute spell, Invincible landed eight shells on the faster and more heavily-armoured German battle-cruiser SMS Lützow at a range of 9,000 yards – five and a half miles.

"Your firing is very good," 3rd Battle-cruiser Squadron's commander Rear Admiral Horace Hood told Cdr Hubert Dannreuther, directing Invincible's gunnery from her foretop. "Every shot is telling."

They were: the hits would prove fatal – Lützow was scuttled that night, the only German capital ship sunk at Jutland. By then, however, her foe was also at the bottom of the North Sea.

For in the middle of her ferocious duel with the High Seas Fleet, Invincible suddenly emerged from the veil of mist, smoke and cordite drifting across the water. She was, recalled the gunnery officer of Lützow's sister Derfflinger, "clear and sharply silhouetted" against the horizon.



● *HMS Invincible as she appeared early in her first commission*

The guns of both German battle-cruisers now trained on Hood's flagship. A shell from one – probably Lützow – smashed through the weak roof of 'Q' turret. The resulting fire raced into the magazines and in an instant, Invincible was torn in two as a succession of explosions ripped through the ship. In 90 seconds she was gone, and with her all but six of the 1,032 men aboard.

The Germans cheered. So too a few Britons, until they saw the red name plate on the shattered stern as they sailed past the wreck.

Invincible's career is brief and, to be honest, mixed.

She was conceived by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jacky Fisher as a 'super cruiser' – a vessel with the firepower of a capital ship, the speed and agility of a cruiser. For that speed and agility, however, she sacrificed armour. "Speed," Fisher determined, "is the best protection."

Her early years were dogged by mechanical problems (her revolutionary electrically-powered turrets proved a failure).

Indeed, so useless were Invincible's turrets that she was incapable of taking her place in the battle lines of the Grand Fleet for the first five years of her life. Only when the turrets were replaced with traditional hydraulic ones on the eve of the Great War was the battle-cruiser a truly operational warship.

New turrets could not, however, resolve poor gunnery. At Invincible's baptism of fire, the battle of Heligoland Bight in August 1914, not one of the 18 shells she fired at her German adversary hit – and this from a range of just 5,000 yards.

It was little better four months later off the Falklands. Fewer than two dozen shells – out of more than 500 fired – struck the ships of von Spee's squadron.

When he raised his flag in Invincible the following year, Horace Hood was determined to improve his flagship's gunnery. In May 1916 she carried out nine days of trials which were 'highly satisfactory'.

The gunnery practice ended on May 30. Barely 24 hours later, Invincible was no more.



Battle Honours

St Vincent 1780
St Kitts 1782
First of June.....1794
Alexandria.....1882
Heligoland.....1914
Falkland Islands.....1914
Jutland 1916

Facts and figures

Class: Invincible-class armoured cruiser (later re-designated battle-cruiser)
Builder: Armstrong & Whitworth, Elswick
Cost: £1,767,515 (roughly £100m today)
Laid down: April 2, 1906
Launched: April 13, 1907
Commissioned: March 20, 1909
Displacement: 20,750 tons
Length: 567ft
Beam: 78ft 6in
Draught: 30ft
Speed: 25 knots
Complement: up to 1,050
Propulsion: 4 x Parsons direct-drive steam turbines powered by 31 Yarrow boilers generating 41,000shp
Armament: 8 x 12in Mk X guns in four twin turrets; 16 x 4in guns; 7 x Maxim machine-guns; 5 x 18in torpedo tubes
Armour: belt 4-6in; decks 1½-2½in; turrets 7in; barbettes 7in

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.81 – Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser

FROM the defining clash of dreadnoughts (*above*) to the very last 'big gun' battle in European waters: the Battle of North Cape.

From the extensive photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum, the posed shot (*right*) shows the torpedo trainer and his shipmate at their action stations on the cruiser HMS Jamaica, safely back in Scapa Flow at New Year 1944.

Less than a week before their ship had played a pivotal role in eliminating Hitler's last real surface threat to the Royal Navy: the battle-cruiser Scharnhorst in the midwinter gloom off the northernmost point in Europe.

Jamaica was a veteran of these waters – she had survived a clash with superior German forces 12 months before in the Barents Sea and spent 1943 shepherding convoys to and from northern Russia.

With the German Army still on Russian soil, Christmas 1943 saw no let-up in convoy traffic to the USSR. Returning home from Russia was Convoy 55A. And heading in the opposite direction, bound for the Kola Inlet, 19 merchantmen, convoy JW 55B.

Both convoys enjoyed substantial protection – more than a dozen Allied warships between them. But also at sea were two far more potent British task groups: a cruiser group (Force 1), and a battleship-cruiser sucker punch (Force 2). The latter – Jamaica and flagship HMS Duke of York – were directed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser.

Fraser epitomises the 'band of brothers' who led the Royal Navy in WW2: bright (he was among the best gunnery officers in the Fleet), brave (he led a raiding party into Russia at the height of its Civil War and volunteered to take part in a Malta convoy "just for the experience"), and above all personable. Fraser was convinced of the supremacy of the Royal Navy, that every man, whatever his rank, whatever his age, belonged "to the finest Service in the world".

He spent his afternoons devising ways to get at the enemy, chewing over schemes and plans, running through imaginary battles in his head. He embraced new technology – aircraft (he had captained carrier HMS Glorious pre-war) and realised the potential radar brought to battle at sea.

The admiral was aided by a fine staff of equal mind and temperament, among them the future First Sea Lord Michael Le Fanu. And he was aided by Bletchley Park.

By late 1943 there was a regular supply of 'Ultra' information – decrypted and translated German radio messages. The decrypts were voluminous, their subject matter everything from U-boat movements and troop transfers, to the discovery of the massacre at Katyn.

And on December 22 1943, amid the latest flurry of intercepts, one reported that the Luftwaffe had spotted JW55B, another that Scharnhorst was at three hours' notice to sail.

Sail she did. The 'lucky' Scharnhorst put to sea on orders from Berlin. With the Red Army driving the Germans inexorably back, something had to be done. The Kriegsmarine's Commander-in-Chief Karl Dönitz ordered his only operational capital ship to sail from its Norwegian fjord and wipe out the convoy. "Do not end the battle with a half-success," he told Scharnhorst's admiral, Erich Bey. "I believe in your attacking spirit. *Sieg und heil*." Barely had Scharnhorst sailed, than the Admiralty signalled Fraser in Duke of York.

Erich Bey never found JW55B – Fraser diverted it safely out of Scharnhorst's grasp. He did, however, run into the first of the RN's task groups, the three cruisers of Force 1 on the morning of Boxing Day. The British salvoes knocked out Scharnhorst's radar; the Germans, in return, achieved nothing.

In the half-light and almost impenetrable snow flurries, however, Bey escaped. He escaped for much of the day until HMS Belfast picked up the battle-cruiser on her radar.

By the late afternoon of December 26, Force 2 had joined Force 1. Scharnhorst was trapped and outgunned.

Her final battle lasted a little under three hours. She fought valiantly, but always at a disadvantage. Fraser's first salvo knocked out one of the German's turrets. Bey, in response, managed to hit Duke of York at least twice. He might even have fled thanks to Scharnhorst's superior speed, but a shell from Fraser's flagship wiped out a boiler room.

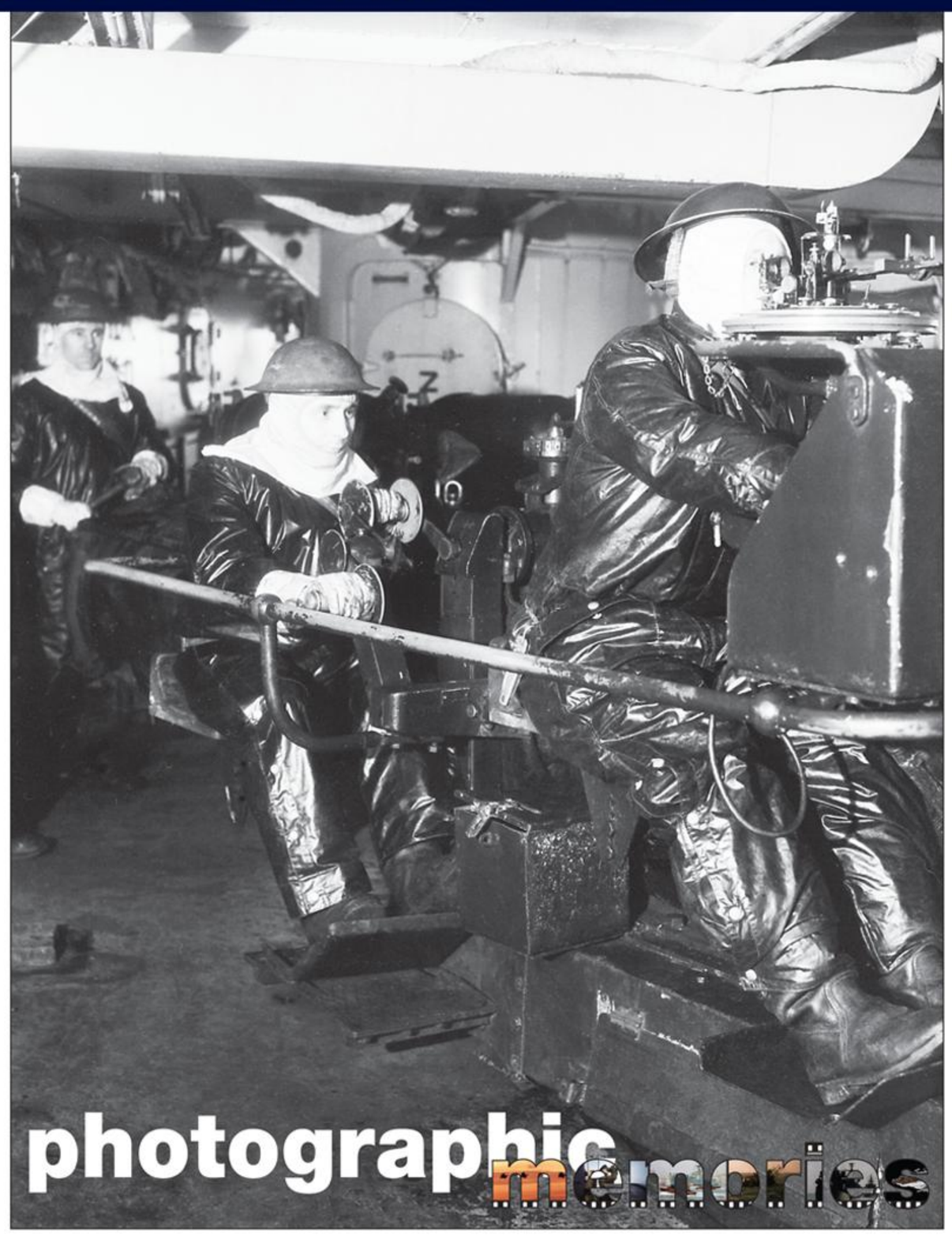
That meant the end. A succession of shells from the cruisers and Duke of York pounded Scharnhorst; more than 30 14in shells from the British flagship alone hit. At least two dozen torpedoes were fired by the cruisers and escorting destroyers. The result was a hulk blazing from end to end which occasionally responded.

At 7.45pm the dull glow shrouded by a smoky cloud which hugged the Barents Sea disappeared. Scharnhorst sank. Only 36 of the 1,968 men aboard were saved.

Bruce Fraser looked upon his foe as he looked upon his own men. That evening he gathered his staff to thank them for their service. "I hope that if any of you are ever called upon to lead a ship into action against an opponent, many times superior, you will command your ship as gallantly as Scharnhorst was commanded today."

The admiral would go on to command the British Pacific Fleet – he represented his nation in Tokyo Bay when Japan surrendered – and to serve as First Sea Lord from 1948-51. He died at the age of 93 in 1981.

■ THIS photograph (A 21174) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at **www.iwmcollections.org.uk**, by emailing **photos@IWM.org.uk**, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



Big Bang theory



‘Gunnery is funnery...’

HMS GLOUCESTER gave her big gun a run-out with 50 salvoes in support of routine exercises in the South Atlantic, *writes Lt Cdr Eleanor Webb, the ship’s Logistics Officer.*

Exercise Cape Bayonet was a practice troop insertion by the Resident Infantry Company (RIC), currently the Coldstream Guards, in the Falklands.

And a Type 42 is just the ticket for Naval Gunfire Support.

A high-effect round leaves the muzzle of a 4.5in gun at 2,800 metres per second – no wonder it looks a little blurred *(above)*.

Gloucester’s Deputy Weapon Engineer Officer (DWEO) Lt Andy Dowse provided us with a “super-simplified” reason for the double bubble as the shell leaves the barrel – all to do with the way the gun is designed to reduce recoil by controlling the super-heated, pressurised gases generated on firing, apparently.

“The muzzle brake at the end of the barrel contains baffles, which, as the rush of gases hits, split it into two puffs,” said Lt Dowse.

“The grille shape of the guard disperses the fumes at right angles, in the mushroom shape, which also means that some of the pressure disperses at right angles and halves the recoil.”

The exercise also involved HMS Clyde, who embarked the Guards and put them ashore in her boats.

Gloucester had already taken station in the bay, and then waited for the troops to move into position and make the request to fire.

And waited, and waited, and waited – 45kt winds, snow and hail can interfere with the best of plans, and there was some delay in getting the troops ashore.

Gunnery was a little less funnery at this point for those manning the Direct Aiming Sighting (DAS) stations for eight hours.

AB James Duffy said: “My job was to follow the fall of shot and report back, based on the plumes as the target itself was out of sight.

“Even with ear-duffs on, the gun makes this massive ‘whumphf’ noise that vibrates straight through you – proper steely.”

The target area was a 200m square, eight miles inland and over a hill – invisible to the ship.

Gloucester relied on RIC spotters to report back on accuracy, trusting that they would have it in their own best interest to give the right directions.

Gloucester’s Gunnery (and Ops) Officer, Lt Tom Rowley, said: “Shoots don’t get much more technical than this.

“It was a tactical shoot, so all about responding to what the troops wanted. And if you’re wrong, you can be very wrong.

“They can see where all your rounds are falling, and they’ll walk you in closer and closer if they’re happy.

“By the time we’d fired 30 salvoes on target, they’d brought us in to about 600 or 700 yards of their position, so they must have been feeling the love.

“A high-effect round will really do some damage, as it’s explosive, either on contact or in the air, depending on the type, so you definitely do not want it dropping too close.”

Lt Rowley was still pleased with himself a couple of days later, when he received the official feedback from the spotter – several grids of tightly-spaced Xs.

“I’m chuffed to pieces with that,” he said. “If that had been a tank detachment, we’d have knocked seven bells of something out of it.”

The spotter’s overall assessment was less colourful, but consisted of two words to send a Gunz to his bed with a smile on his face: “Good shoot”.

One person not always so excited by a 4.5in shoot is the Buffer.

CPO Wayne ‘Rattz’ Rattenbury was spotted forlornly kicking the empty casings that had dumped directly from the turret onto his fo’c’sle instead of the shot-mats.

A Buffer’s life is one long, hard-enough struggle with the elements, without a conspiracy of gunners to make dents in his paintwork.

He said: “It’s like cleaning my kids’ bedrooms. Stuff everywhere.

“Cordite is a horrible, smelly substance that coats everything it can get to.

“And don’t get me started on the drop-nosed pins from my guardrails. Heaven only knows where they all go.”

But he’s a cheerful chap really, not to mention efficient, and stand fast one splodge of paintwork that will be getting some TLC when the weather clears up, the fo’c’sle was looking its usual (reasonably) pristine self within hours.

CO Cdr David George said: “There’s more to a successful shoot than counting down and pushing a button.

“There’s the training and drill that goes on all the time, even when there are no rounds in the breach, to ensure that RN gunners are simply the best.

“There are the WE and the part-of-ship lads who are up there for hours before and after the shoot, preparing the gun and the fo’c’sle.

“Ultimately though, there is nothing – nothing – that gladdens a captain’s heart more than ‘firing for effect’ on the 4.5.

“Gunnery is the heart and soul of the Royal Navy.

“Fifty salvoes, troops calling it in on the ground, the ship majestically settled on her firing run – magic!”





● *(Above left) LETWE Mark Nolan and ETWE Terence ‘Knocker’ White return spent casings to the Gun Bay*

● *(Left) ETWEs Richard Urwin and Andy Hammond clean hot cordite off the muzzle brake before it cools, hardens and has to be chipped off*



● *Two ecstatic PWOs survey their handiwork on the fo’c’sle on completion of the shoot – Lt Tom Rowley (left) and Lt Cdr Craig Woodhead*



● *AB James Duffy follows the fall of shot from the DAS station while ETWE Terence ‘Knocker’ White (above) gathers casings from the 4.5in gun*





● *Buffer Rattz Rattenbury surveys his fo’c’sle after the shoot*







’land ahoy

pictures: la(phots) simmo simpson, gaz weatherston and dan hooper









THINGS must be bad if you look upon Ant and Dec as saviours.

But at 5.30am, in the middle of a tropical rainstorm, with the prospect of mud, creepy crawlies, an assault course, more mud, some booby traps, even more mud, the sight of the two (rather irritating) TV presenters might have been encouraging.

Right idea. Wrong jungle.

Ant and Dec are in Australia. I’m a matelot, get me out of here was in Ghana.

Twenty-one matelots from HMS Portland volunteered to spend time at the Ghanaian Jungle Warfare School, deep in the Ghanaian jungle, when their frigate visited the African nation.

It took a four-hour drive to reach the Seth Anthony Barracks at Akim Achiase, where instructors introduced the sailors to the art of jungle ambush, explaining: “The jungle is neutral, Junglers need to be able to live, fight or die hard.”

There followed a booby trap demonstration which underlined the difficulty of operating and fighting in this harsh environment – compounded by a tropical downpour.

When the heavens had been emptied, Ghanaian trainees and teachers, plus sailors, gathered around a large bonfire for some grub (rather than grubs), dits, dancing, and drumming (the latter courtesy of CH Luke Netto... by day king of the galley, by night king of the sticks as percussionist in Portland’s band).

Long before sunrise the next day, the sailors were awake and ready for a 5.30 start on a run followed by an assault course.

“It was at this point that I was looking round for Ant and Dec to ‘get me out of here’, but I’m glad I cracked on,” said AB(WS) Kelly Doyle.

“Running through the local villages with the rest of the trainees all singing, and the locals cheering us on, was something that was so uplifting and something I’ll never forget.”

We did not, of course, dispatch a £100m cutting-edge warship to Africa so a few sailors could have a rumble in the jungle.

No, Portland’s visit to the port of Tema – one of the last on a six-month grand tour which took her to South America and the Caribbean – was aimed at helping to train Ghanaian naval forces.

A group of 30 Ghanaian sailors joined the frigate alongside for ‘static’ demonstrations of what Portland does.

“Everyone had a turn handling the hoses and banging wedges into the flood boxes, resulting in some very wet but happy trainees,” said CO Cdr Mike Knott.

And then the visitors witnessed a board and search scenario played out by the Type 23’s RN/RM boarding team.

The next day the visitors were back, this time sailing with the frigate for a more lively boarding demonstration in the Gulf of Guinea.

As Portland sailed the trainees witnessed a ‘quickdraw’ exercise – testing the ability of the ship’s company to respond to a suicide attack, here in the form of a Ghanaian rib.

The training then moved on to more technical aspects including legal briefings and an account from Portland’s boarding officer, Lt Paul White, of his experiences.

It was then the turn of the Ghanaian trainees to put into practise everything that they had learnt in the previous couple of days.

Under the watchful eye of the instructors, they boarded the patrol boat GNS Anzone, playing the role of a merchant vessel.

That wasn’t quite the end of Ghanaian involvement with F79. Four officers remained on board for the penultimate leg of Portland’s 32,000-mile odyssey, the passage from Tema to Las Palmas in Gran Canaria.

The sub-tropical Spanish islands were the 11th – and last – nation visited during the ship’s seven months away.

Waiting for Portland in the Canaries were some 50 friends and families of crew members who sailed with the ship for the last 1,600 miles of the frigate’s deployment.

They witnessed the good (the Remembrance Service in the ship’s hangar) and the bad (a rather sporty crossing of Biscay) of life at sea before Plymouth Hoe came into view.

And so ended a deployment which missed the British summer (there wasn’t much to miss), crossed the equator on both sides of the Americas, caught quite a lot of snow in the Falklands, and saw a lot of South America (courtesy of Chile and Peru), a smidgin of the Caribbean (a shortish visit to Cartagena), and a little of Africa.

“Portland has achieved a great deal, not only enhancing peace and stability within the South Atlantic and West African regions, but also contributing to the fight against cocaine trafficking and narco-terrorism,” said Cdr Knott.

”After travelling over 32,000 miles and visiting 11 countries you cannot put into words how wonderful it is for the crew to meet up again with their families who have not seen them for such a long period of time. I am always so proud of how the ship’s company deals with the strain of being away from their loved ones.”

















'Exceeding all expectations...'

SUCH are the vagaries of the British weather.

Two ceremonies, one day apart, 700 or so Royal Marines of 40 Commando, thousands of people paying their respects.

Except that one took place in glorious autumn sunshine, the other barely three miles away, was lashed by wind and rain.

The sacrifices of the green berets during six bitter months in Helmand were remembered on home turf, first in the presence of their Captain General at Norton Manor camp, then on the streets of nearby Taunton at a public homecoming parade.

Some 2,500 friends and family gathered at 40 Cdo's base for a medal presentation with the Duke of Edinburgh performing the honours.

To the green berets he presented the Afghan Medal; to families, the Elizabeth Cross.

Fourteen men from 40 Cdo were killed during the tour of duty. The families of 12 of the fallen headed to Somerset to receive the recently-instituted medal, which is presented to the next of kin of Servicemen and women killed in the line of duty.

Aside from the dead, the commando suffered upwards of 50 serious casualties in Helmand, many victims of booby traps and improvised bombs left by the insurgents.

With the aid of sticks or assisted by comrades, they rose to receive their medals from the duke. They had, said their Commanding Officer Lt Col Paul James, striven to be present at this ceremony.

"It was a fantastic occasion, a very proud day," he said. "There were more than 2,500 people in Norton Manor, probably the largest ever gathering here.

"There is an element of sadness for those families for whom we weren't able to bring back their sons or their husbands."

Having been honoured by royalty and loved ones, 24 hours later the commandos were fêted by the people of Taunton in foul weather.

Despite the wind and rain, banners and Union Jacks large and small were plentiful on the streets of Somerset's county town (as were umbrellas), as Taunton ground to a halt to offer its support, applauding the Royal Marines as they marched past.

A Guard of Honour was inspected by Somerset's Lord Lieutenant, Lady Gass, Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox, and Taunton Deane's Mayor, Cllr Jefferson Horsley; the latter told the green berets that across the district there was "a sense of togetherness and support that goes beyond normal relationships even expected in garrison towns".

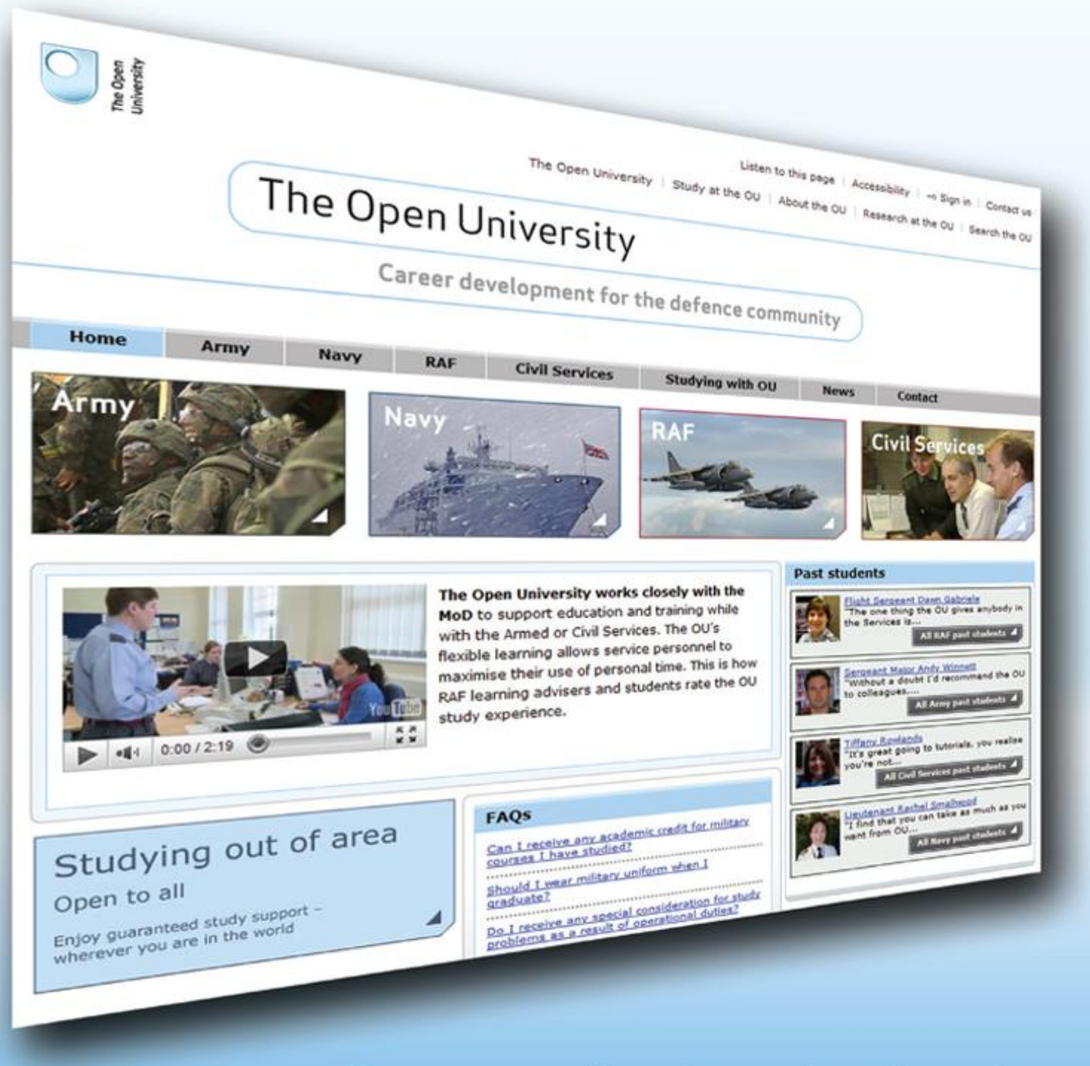
And from Dr Fox: "If they can brave the Taliban we can brave the weather. 40 Cdo Royal Marines has returned to the warmest of welcomes after a tour in which their hard work and sacrifice has made us here at home safer."

It's estimated half of Taunton's populace watched proceedings – a turn-out which, said Lt Col James, "exceeded all our expectations. The people of Taunton are always fully behind us and today marching through the town meant a lot to us."

■ Fourteen members of 40 Cdo RM lost their lives during their latest tour of duty in Afghanistan: Sgt Steven Derbyshire, L/Cpl Michael Taylor, Cpls Christopher Harrison, Stephen Walker and Stephen Curley, and Mnes Adam Brown, Scott Taylor, Jonathan Crookes, Matthew Harrison, David Hart, Steven Birdsall, Anthony Hotine, Richard Hollington and Paul Warren.

Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell, RNAS Yeovilton

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A smarter wa



● *A newly-qualified member of the Divers Course takes to the water at the Defence Diving School* Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby

OIL sizzles in a hot pan. A trainee chef is about to add garlic when the instructor intervenes.

"That garlic's starting to burn – put the rest of the ingredients in. Let me show you..."

Oil sizzles in a hot pan. A trainee chef is about to add garlic when the instructor intervenes.

"What do you think is happening to the garlic?"

"It's starting to burn..."

"Okay, how could you do that differently to prevent that from happening?"

Similar scenarios, but a world apart in training terms – and the Naval Service (NS) wants to move from one to the other.

Not from burnt garlic to fried garlic; from lecturing to coaching.

And the new initiative will see coaching become embedded in all NS training over the next three years – though it may take longer for the 'old ways' to die out.

There are already examples of good coaching practice across the Naval Service, but Lt Cdr Rachel Smallwood, Deputy Chief of Staff for DNPS (Director of Naval Personnel Strategy), wants to see the message spread more widely.

"There are pockets at the moment – places where little bonfires have been lit," said Lt Cdr Smallwood.

"But Second Sea Lord wants the Naval Service to be a learning organisation."

The officer explained that in many cases a workforce is so busy planning ahead that no one has time to look back.

"A learning organisation finds time to reflect and learn," she said, "and we should be moving away from a blame culture to a learning culture.

"Coaching means unlocking the potential of an individual, so they can be the best they can be.

"The Naval Service is adding to that by looking at teams and organisations as well.

"For example, in a ship on basic operational sea training, we are looking at the CO or a chef, and making them the best they can be, but also looking at the operations team, and the ship as a whole, to be the best they can be as well.

"And in the current climate that's what we need to do – get the best out of our people.

"Coaching is nothing new, it is just a part of good leadership, drawing things out of people. It is 'ask, don't tell'.

"It is not 'don't do that, do this...' but 'what will happen if you do that?'

"If a navigation team is training in a bridge simulator, we want to see instructors saying 'Think about what you are doing – what are the consequences? How could you do it better?'

"If they are thinking about it they are learning.

Good to Greater...

"You may have heard of the Royal Navy's drive to introduce coaching into our training regime and wider personal development," *writes Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery.*

"Some may even have benefited from it in our training establishments since it was introduced into Lympstone seven years ago, and then wider through BRNC, Raleigh and MWS.

"It has, I am convinced, been a significant contributor to improving the success rates in a number of training pipelines.

"I have for some while been a supporter of coaching. The article below sets out the 'why, what and how' of coaching.

"One of my personal objectives is to reinforce the progress made so far in the training world, and to expand the coaching methodology and mindset to the wider Navy – the front line and Headquarters.

"Coaching techniques will come easily to many, less easily to some. The Royal Naval Leadership Academy and the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines will put together programmes to help all.

"Within the next year or so, all of our leaders will be introduced to the two coaching models that have been adopted for use by everyone – from Leading Hands and Corporals upwards.

"It is important to recognise that coaching is not the be-all and end-all of developing our Service as a learning organisation, and it is but one way of developing leadership.

"But I am certain it will improve both.

"I look forward to the positive changes that coaching can achieve for all of us: Good to Greater."

"The concept was introduced to the Defence Diving School two years ago, which helped the pass rate rise from 25 per cent to 80 per cent.

"You go in there and there are groups talking about learning.

"It's a culture change that will grow in the Naval Service.

"Second Sea Lord started the policy as Naval Secretary, and now he can follow it through as 2SL."

The new coaching policy is due to appear in this month's edition of BR3 (Part 5, Chapter 21), providing a very simple explanation of what it is.

"There are also two annexes, two models that have been agreed on," said Lt Cdr Smallwood.

The two models are GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, Will) and the Feedback model – basically moving away from 'you don't want to do it like that' to three questions – what went well? What didn't go well? Next time you do it, what will you do differently?

"Everyone can get their heads round those two and then review it and perhaps get a bit more ambitious," she said.

"The GROW model empowers and motivates people, while the feedback model means they learn from what they have done."

From this month all one- and two-star officers at Navy Command HQ will get a one-hour coaching induction, looking at both models.

There will also be a workshop series – something senior officers would not normally expect to see, but simply staging a briefing to lecture them would be the exact opposite of the coaching ethos...

"I hope they then generate feedback – hopefully they will see the benefit and ask for workshops for their departments," said Lt Cdr Smallwood.

"I want HQ to be a model of excellence for the rest – the Naval Service, Defence and (ambitious as I am) the wider public service."

Two current front-line examples are the Defence Diving School and HMS Richmond, acting as trailblazers for other units, while FOST is also blazing that trail.

"The Royal Marines are probably the most advanced in terms of coaching – they've been doing it for seven years now to enable people to reach the required standard," said Lt Cdr Smallwood.

"Hopefully they will act as a springboard for other units and ships so that we can see best practice spread throughout the Naval Service and beyond."

Flag Officer Sea Training (South) – FOST(S) – can point to the compulsory introduction to coaching for all sea riders in 2007 as being evidence of their long-standing commitment to the ethos.



That has since moved on apace, and a post (at WO1 level) dedicated to delivering coaching support to FOST(S) staff is due to stand-up shortly.

The aim of Basic Operational Sea Training (BOST) is to maximise a unit's operational capability – the ship's company should already possess the individual skills required to undertake the tasks expected of them.

What they learn under the guidance of FOST(S) staff is how to use these skills as part of the wider team.

Many of the capabilities BOST looks to build up, such as teamwork, cannot simply be taught – they need to be developed, and coaching is one of the tools which enables the sea rider to maximise the team's potential.

Feedback received by FOST(S) highlights the value that coaching has, with sea riders regularly receiving praise from ships' staff for the manner in which they have developed the teams on board.

Commanding officers often comment that there has been a clear move away from the 'green foulie' FOST of old, reaffirming that the T in FOST stands for training, not testing.

The correct use of feedback by sea riders is essential to ensure that ship's teams not only devise their own solutions for their mistakes, but also develop their skills to analyse their own performance and correct mistakes long after the ship has completed BOST.

"Building a rapport with FRPP team members is important to develop trust and establish a two-way understanding," said WO1 Adams (SCDI2 to FOST(S)).

"Credibility and empathy are important to demonstrate to the ship's team that FOST(S) staff were once upon a time also in their position at the 'coal face'."

WO1 Garry Smith, X1 to FOST(S), said: "The old fashioned FOST approach was to focus on a long list of pick-up points.

"Today FOST(S) tries to emphasise the positives and by using coaching techniques encourage the ship's team to spread good practice across the whole ship whilst still maintaining the absolute FOST standard."

HMS Richmond has completed her pre-deployment training package with FOST prior to sailing this month for counter piracy operations in the Indian Ocean with the EU and NATO.

The ship is working to encourage every sailor to not just respond to the collective debrief and pick up points from training, but to actively seek their own individual ones.

The attitude and skills required to challenge oneself in this way are something that will develop with experience and maturity, the ship believes.

But that doesn't mean it has to be done alone – there are many wiser, older hands on board who can help by not just telling their younger comrades where they are going wrong but also asking 'what



● *Students training at HMS Sultan* Picture: LA(Phot) Darby Allen

Empower train

THE creation of the Coaching, Learning and Development Team within the RN School of Marine Engineering at HMS Sultan is beginning to yield benefits, both to the individual and to the School.

New courses joining the School now receive a short package on learning and exam strategies which begins to empower students to learn for themselves and take responsibility for their learning.

The team is also focussed on the development and wider employment of coaching principles across the staff, through a series of coaching workshops and leadership development sessions.

An element of coaching is delivered to instructors within the Train the Trainer initiative and from this month a live action coaching day will be integrated into the course, leading to the ILM Level 3 Award.

The team believes that success is about unlocking the potential of both staff and students.

The 'golden thread' throughout the coaching practice, at all levels, is about empowering individuals to learn for themselves and to take personal ownership of their issues/learning/development, rather than a reliance on 'spoonfeeding' from instructors or line management.

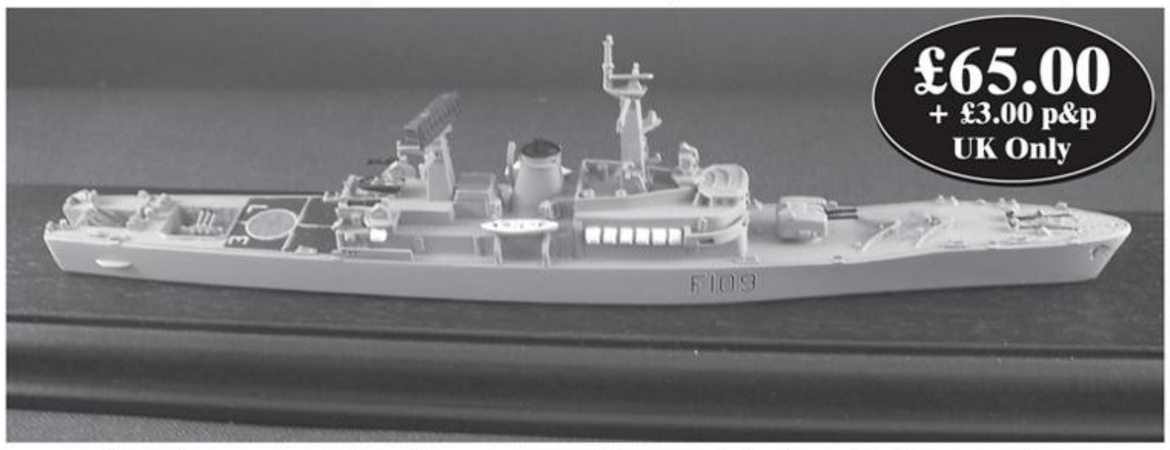
Things are still at an early stage, but there is plenty of excitement at the progress made so far and the positive effect that a small group of people can have on the organisation.

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● A FOST firefighting exercise
Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan

are we getting right?' and 'where do we want to go now?'

Richmond has benefited from the support of the Coaching Advisory Team (CAT) at the Maritime Warfare School.

The CAT has provided on-board training to refresh the coaching and mentoring skills delivered at command courses or Junior Officers' Leadership Course, and as an effective plug in the knowledge gap for the old and bold whose training was 'less recent'...

This knowledge is being applied across the ship in a changing attitude to debriefing.

Rather than just telling the team or sailor where he or she may need to develop, there is a definite benefit in engaging them.

Working on the principle that two heads are better than one, the people closest to the action are asked 'what will you do differently next time?', 'how do you think you have improved since last time?' and then – hopefully – people will start asking 'how can I be better?'

It is all part of the effort to encourage individual ownership and responsibility.

Similar developments are taking place ashore.

There is already a six-strong Coaching, Learning and Development Team at **HMS Raleigh**, set up by weapon engineer Lt Andy Anderson.

He sees his task as getting the best out of fledgling sailors by encouraging them to think for themselves, from simple things like time management and personal organisation (ie sorting out kit) to getting through challenges such as the new high ropes course.

But how do you do that?

"Ask, don't tell," said PO Steve Waudby. "You ask trainees how they would do something, rather than telling them."

A coach doesn't have to be a subject matter expert – a mentor does – but he or she has to be good at bringing the best out of people.

"Why did David Beckham go to the World Cup?" asked PO Waudby. "He couldn't play, but he still went because people respect him, listen to him."

So who's not a good motivator? "Mike Bassett," retorted Andy.

If you want to see how not to do it, watch the fictional England manager's half-time team talk.

"Nothing but effing and blinding," Andy added. "No motivation whatsoever. You have to build a rapport with people."

He continued: "It's about unlocking someone's potential – if they've got it in them.

"If you scratch beneath the surface then these are very capable people, but some might have fears or phobias – a fear of heights, or going through the tunnel on the assault course.

"The aim is to get sailors thinking for themselves, to solve their own problems.

"It's more about listening than teaching, but it's not pink and fluffy – there's still a place for the old ways."

The Cunningham Division Leadership Team Coaching Session provides an insight into the new regime.

After just five days in the Navy, six recruits are given their first promotion – selected as part of the management team in the roles of Class Leader, Deputy Class Leader and Mess Bosun for their classes.

It's daunting, but a session with the Recruit School's Coaching Learning and Development Team can calm fears and unlock their potential to fulfil their roles.

For the recruits, a discussion with PO Waudby on what makes a good leader helped ease concerns.

Trainee Wtr David Lowery said: "We all thought it was going to be hard to get through the course and having been given these jobs we all think it's going to be a lot harder now.

"It's a great privilege, though, to be selected as class leader."

For 16-year-old trainee Wtr Chloe Birken, her selection as deputy class leader was a surprise.

She said: "At first I panicked. It was a surprise because I thought it was an age-related thing."

Mess Bosun trainee ETME Tommy Lacey said: "I feel there is a lot of pressure on my shoulders, but I'm mega-proud to be given the job."

After an hour with PO Waudby discussing leadership qualities, voicing concerns and sharing their experiences, the team faced the challenge with more confidence.

Trainee Wtr Lowery said: "The session really helped.

"We are all in the same boat and it was good to hear that other people have the same concerns.

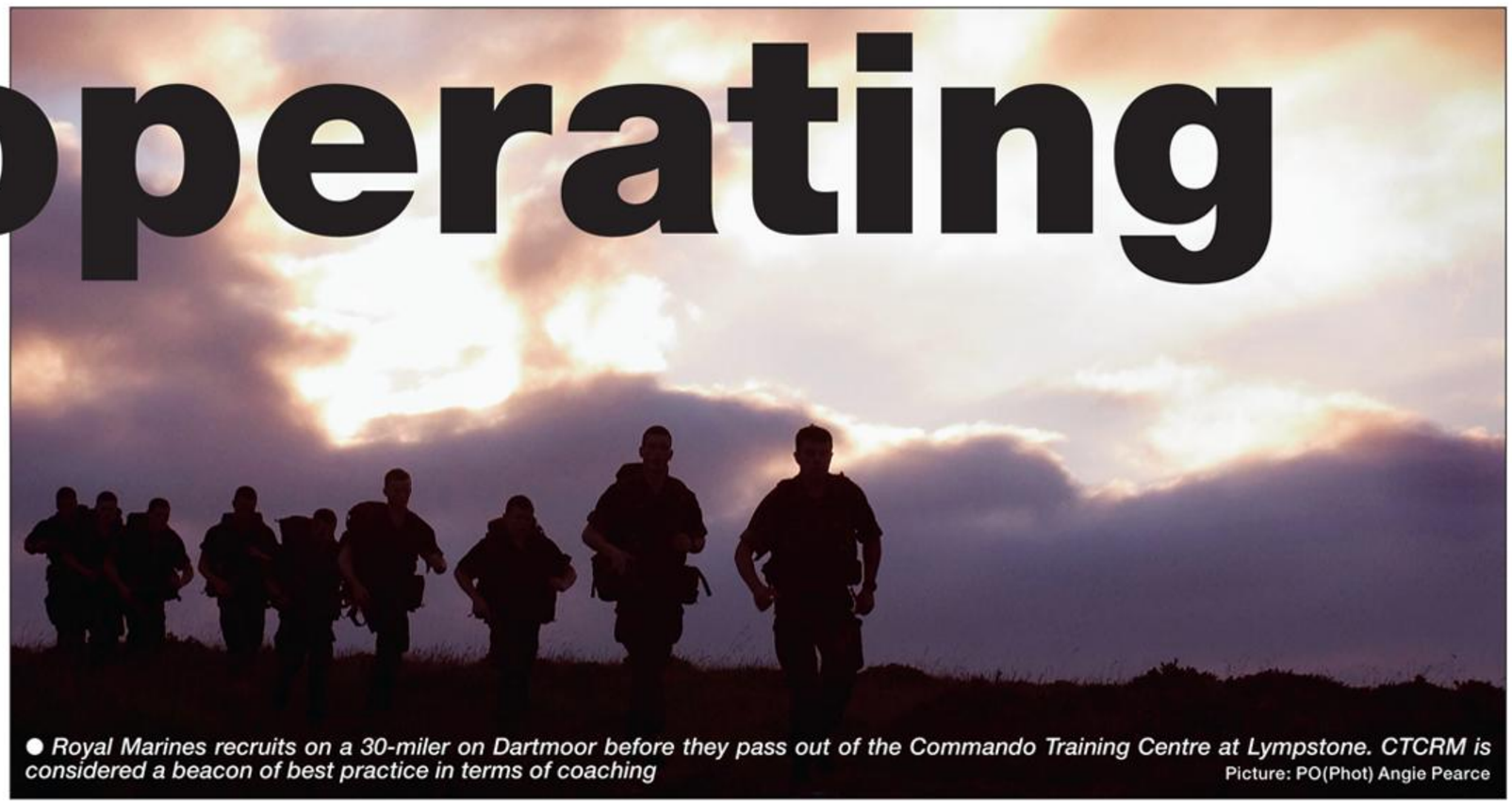
"The biggest thing I think we will all take away is that even though we will be in competition at times with the other class, ultimately we are all one team and we've got to work together."

PO Waudby said: "It was a good two-way session.

"We recognise that most recruits selected for these roles have no leadership or coaching experience, yet they are expected to lead their classes for the next eight weeks.

"Their instructors have obviously seen something in them to indicate that they are capable of doing these jobs, and our role is to help the trainees see that too.

"My end product is when they go away with the ownership of their skills, which they can then develop into their team within their classes."



● Royal Marines recruits on a 30-miler on Dartmoor before they pass out of the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone. CTCRM is considered a beacon of best practice in terms of coaching
Picture: PO(Phot) Angie Pearce

Inspiring a deeper understanding

THE Defence Diving School (DDS) introduced coaching and mentoring as a result of the success of similar initiatives at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM), as the parallels of diver training and RM basic training involve activities of a physically arduous nature and carries a risk of injury.

High failure rates had been reduced at CTCRM. By way of contrast, the passing-out rates at the DDS continued failing to attain sufficient numbers of quality students and achieving the required high standards, in safe and capable military diving.

It was agreed, in consultation with CTCRM, that the root cause at the DDS was connected with the instructional culture that existed within the training establishment.

The coaching process started by a mentoring session from Alexi Jansen (CTCRM) to the senior management at the DDS.

With 'buy in' from these senior staff, the DDS went through a process which was colloquially referred to as the 'Big Bang'.

This was initiated with two two-day workshops, delivered by Alexi and staff from CTCRM to all diving training staff, whether military or civilian instructors.

There was, initially, a high level of resistance and scepticism amongst the older generation of instructional staff, but by hard work and a purpose to succeed, the Training Standard Team staff at the DDS drove the attitudinal changes required through.

Slowly but surely, the instructors adapted, so that eventually the antipathetic instructor stood out as deviating from the norm.

The coaching approach has now been introduced as part of the Military Diving Instructor Course (Induction Training), which guides the new instructor from the outset of a coaching (instructor) billet.

The key to good coaching is the feedback process, as this involves everyone associated with the learning process – strong students, weaker students and the instructor or coach – working together.

Feedback, as a daily process, gives ownership and empowerment to students, allowing them to use their limited experience to evaluate an individual's and team's performance, solve problems and reflect on what they have learnt, thereby gaining further experiences which assists them to advance in the learning process.

Take, for example, the Away Standby Diver Drill.

At the DDS, would-be divers have received the key learning points, as a lesson and demonstration, and they then apply these to the practical diving activity, such as recovering a diving casualty from the water.

Each student is required to demonstrate competence in the activity, and all involved have some part to play, be it the casualty, the rescue diver, the recovery team in the boat or those observing.

On completion of the drill the students are given space to assess the activity, and to discuss the positive and the negative points.

A spokesman is nominated who delivers the students' findings to the course and the instructor.

On completion of this phase the instructor, who has a list of his own observations, reinforces the positive points they have made, adding any further positive points, then exploring with discussion any additional points the students may not have recognised.

These additional findings are extracted from the students by effective questioning, which encourages reflection and evaluation of their own performance.

In confirmation, the students summarise how they will improve their performance next time.

The DDS is now in a place far distant from the old-school approach of "You did this wrong – do it right next time!"

Between November 2008 and November 2010, 32 DDS students have been referred to the MWS Coaching Advisory Team (CAT), or the DDS in-house 'Coaching Champion'.

All were experiencing some form of difficulty and causing concern for the instructor.

Not all students will be suited to military diving, and the DDS has lost six of the 32.

However, the remaining students achieved the required standard through a better understanding from the instructional staff and an effective coaching approach.

Before 2008 it would have been highly probable that all 32 would have been lost to military diving, as they would have been abandoned by the system as "not having potential".



● FOST sea riders put sailors under pressure during operational sea training
Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan



It INT half hot, mum...



● *Cumberland's Mk 8 Lynx pulls away from her mother ship*
Pictures: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock, FRPU West

KNUCKLING down to a sustained period at sea, Her Majesty's Ship Cumberland is in the middle of a mission to safeguard the waters of the Gulf from pirates, smugglers and terrorists.

Her men and women operate with a new weapon in their armoury.

Not guns or missiles. Information.

It comes courtesy of the Fleet Intelligence Centre.

The centre at HMS Collingwood has just stood up to provide detailed and dedicated info to deployed ships, naval squadrons and Royal Marines units.

It's not often that naval intelligence features in these pages. It's a black art. The words 'classified' and 'top secret' don't necessarily sit comfortably with 'newspaper'.

In fact, not much in the intelligence world is actually secret. "There's very little out there that is classified," explains Lt Cdr Colvin Osborn, one of several intelligence experts at the hub of the new centre, the Maritime Intelligence Fusion Cell.

That said, there's enough sufficiently classified to make the headquarters not your typical Collingwood building.

From the outside it looks like a big shed or sports centre. It's only inside you realise you're entering something a bit different. Surrender anything electronic – laptops, mobile phones and the like – and pass through those *Spooks*-esque tube doors.

And inside it's lots of people staring at computers. With charts of the world on the wall. And a couple of clocks.

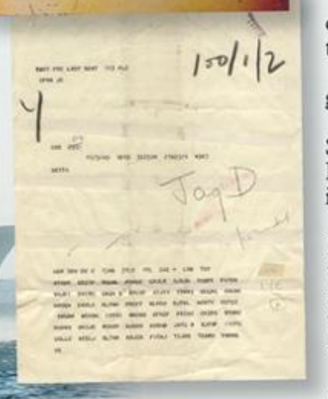
But a few framed panels on the wall give a clue to the role.

There's a picture of Capt Mansfield Smith-Cummings, the father of the British Secret Service, immortalised in fiction by Ian Fleming as M.

There's one too of Ewen Montagu, creator of the 'man who never was' who convinced the Germans that the Allies weren't landing in Sicily but elsewhere in the Med.

There's Capt Rodger Winn who, with the help of Enigma de-codes (*bottom 'telegram'*), helped to defeat the U-boat in WW2.





And there's 'Blinker' Hall, head of the fabled Naval Intelligence Division which cracked German codes in the Great War and precipitated the Battles of Dogger Bank and Jutland.

And there's a small Western Union telegram, a series of three, four and five-digit numbers filling 17 lines of a piece of paper, sent to the German Embassy in Mexico in January 1917. The world knows it as the Zimmermann Telegram (*top telegram*), promising Mexico three US states if it sided with the Kaiser in WW1.

Decoded by the RN, it was handed to the Americans at a moment when the Kaiser's U-boats were attacking shipping indiscriminately. It helped to push the USA into war with Germany on Britain's side.

The telegram was broken by men of Room 40. Nearly a century on, the FIC is its modern-day successor.

Room 40 had its eyes firmly fixed on Germany. The FIC (sadly the room number of the hub of operations isn't 40...) has dissected the globe into five zones, reflecting the Navy's priorities and missions.

There's the North Atlantic ("our backyard"), the Mediterranean, South Atlantic, the Somali Basin/Arabian Gulf, and the rest of the world, all overseen by a team of two dozen sailors in the fusion cell.

Of these areas, the Middle East and Horn of Africa is by far the smallest geographically – but as it's the Fleet's area of main effort (there were some 15 warships, submarines, auxiliaries and naval air units in the region as of the beginning of November), it gets a dedicated team of analysts. On top of that, each ship deploying is assigned an intelligence expert.

The Mighty Sausage is the centre's very first 'customer'. Nine months before the ship deployed, her CO received an introductory call from the Collingwood team. Thereafter the experts began building up a 'deployment intelligence guide' covering all the issues affecting the region – economics, climates, insurgency, unrest, cultural/religious issues, potential threats – pooled from all the available sources.

In the case of an anti-piracy patrol such as F85s, that guide includes the latest information on pirate hot-spots, their camps, their tactics and weaponry, and recent activity.

When finished, the centre handed all the information to the Mighty Sausage's command team to draw up the CO's intelligence estimate – it's down to them to decide what they're likely to face during their six-plus months away.

"We don't advise, we give information. It's the CO's ship – it's down to him to decide what to do," Lt Cdr Osborn.

"If we've done our job correctly before a ship deploys, there should be no surprises."

To that end there's no thought of brushing aside the pirates as mere fishermen armed with AK47s or Caribbean drug traffickers as simple-minded criminals.

"These people are in the business of making money – it's in their interests to keep pace with technology," Capt Jon Perkins, Deputy Assistant Chief-of-Staff Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (thankfully shortened to DACOS ISTAR).

"It's our job to stay one step ahead of them."

The pirates in the Somali basin may look like a ragtag bunch armed with basic weapons in very basic craft, but behind them is a relatively sophisticated intelligence network which tracks the movements of merchant vessels.

Half a world away, Central and South American druglords are using 'narco subs' – semi-submersible fibre-glass boats which are extremely hard for the eye or sonar to spot.

To stay that 'one step ahead' of these criminal elements, as well as rogue states and potential foes, the naval intelligence world is undergoing one of the biggest shake-ups in its 100-plus-year history.

Firstly there's the centre itself, formally opened by Major General Garry Robison RM, Chief-of-Staff Capability and the RN's Commander Maritime Operations, Rear Admiral Mark Anderson.

As well as the HQ in Fareham, there will be satellite buildings/offices elsewhere.

Next there's a fundamental restructuring in a world where the buzzwords are 'intelligence-led operations' and (courtesy of the Americans, naturally) 'intelligence dominance'.

"There are so many people who have done magnificent things in naval intelligence, but no naval intelligence specialisation exists as such," Capt Perkins explains.

"It has been here for 100 years, but it has been run by gifted amateurs. Now there's a real drive to recognise that it's a professional sub-specialisation of the Warfare Branch."

It is one of the smallest arms of the RN – 86 officers. But it's about to grow – massively. The aim on the officer side alone is to more than double numbers to 170 plus. And there will be an increase in employment for ratings as well.

A 14-week course is being introduced for intelligence officers; if they pass they alternate between intelligence postings and General Service duties for the rest of their careers.

What's expected of intelligence officers and ratings, says Capt Perkins, is "an inquiring mind. It might sound clichéd, but we want people who think outside the box. We also want people who are thorough – this is not the place for those who are slapdash."

The starting point for any intelligence they gather is 'open source': newspapers, television, Internet, Google Earth, Wikipedia, official reports, publications.

Throw in material gathered from other, classified sources and a ship could drown in intelligence material.

Which is not a good thing. Lots of chaff. A bit of wheat.

Or as Cdr Chris Dyke, head of Fleet Intelligence at Northwood, puts it: "Take data, turn it into information, analyse it, then create intelligence which a commanding officer can use to make decisions."

He continues: "Most wars have been caused by bad intelligence. What you don't hear about are the conflicts prevented by good intelligence."

There are, no doubt, many more successes in military intelligence than those listed earlier; when it comes to failures, well the list is seemingly endless.

Barbarossa. Pearl Harbor. D-Day (for the Germans; it worked quite nicely for the Allies...). The Tet Offensive. Yom Kippur. Falklands. We could go on...

There's even a best-selling book on the subject, *Military Intelligence Blunders*. It's regularly updated.

It's down to the Fleet Intelligence Centre to ensure a new chapter's not added.

● *HMS Cumberland's RN/RM boarding teams practise manoeuvres with the frigate's RIBs*



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All change through the decades

NINE decades of change were captured in one glance when Wrens' uniforms from across the years were modelled at the Association of Wrens anniversary service in London.

Thanks to the efforts of Kathy Carter and Kathy Rolls, of Yeovil branch, the uniforms pictured right were found and refurbished to rekindle memories for those attending the service held at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Pictured from left:

- Modern day desert kit, as modelled by its owner, POAET(M) Becky Webb, who serves with the Commando Helicopter Force at HMS Heron;
- Bell bottoms from the 1980s – PO Louise Wrightson, also of HMS Heron, donned Mrs Nicky Smith's uniform for the display;
- A replica World War 1 uniform worn by Mrs Helen Marshall, part of the Bluejackets re-enactment group since 2002 – she was spotted during Portsmouth Navy Days;
- LWtr Tracey Poultney, of HMS Heron, clad in the Wren Petty Officer's uniform of the 1960s and 70s, the uniform on this occasion being lent by Mrs Sandy Walton;
- The World War 2/1950s 2nd Officer uniform of 2/O WRNS Adrien 'Biddy' Pocock, who flew as a Wren Radio Mechanic on test flights with RNVT pilot Laurence Olivier (yes, *that* Laurence Olivier) was worn by LAET Lyndsey Gascoigne of HMS Heron;
- World War 2 PO's uniform, worn by its owner, Patricia Blackett-Barber, Ch/WRN Radio Supervisor (OPSHQ) RNR, who worked on the Diamond Jubilee of the WRNS exhibition at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich.

CPO ETS Ann Jones, Training Analyst at RAF Halton, introduced the group to the Princess Royal.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Amanda Reynolds



The threads of history

ECHOES of the past resounded through the crypt of St Martin-in-the-Fields as the Association of Wrens marked its 90th anniversary with a service of commemoration and rededication.

And the most tangible example of the threads of history – apart from the gathering of former Wrens and current Servicewomen, there was a small display of old uniforms at a reception in the crypt which sparked memories and debates.

"Trying to find uniforms for the 'Uniforms of the Decades' presentation was quite a challenge for the two Kathys (Rolls and Carter) from Yeovil branch, plus their 'runners' and serving RN models," said Celia Saywell, Public Relations officer for the AOW.

"Hats – particularly tricorns, with black tops – were either found to be guarded with the owner's life, imprisoned in a museum or were coming apart at the seams.

"Luckily the World War 1 uniform had been made by the wearer, Mrs Helen Marshall from the Bluejackets Re-Enactment Group."

The result was an impressive and unusual Guard of Honour for the Princess Royal, the patron of the Association.

"Kathy Rolls was 'mistress of the wardrobe' – or perhaps in Naval terms found herself returning to her WRNS category of N&A Stores," said Celia.

"One difficulty she faced was trying to match the volunteer models with uniforms that they could fit into – the difference between the sizes worn many years ago, and the sizes generally worn today, was noticeable.

"Also of interest was the quality of the World War 2 Second Officer's moleskin uniform – just beautiful, and this more than made up for the 'Jersey: Seaman's' that needed moth-holes to be darned.

"Members of the Association were thrilled to see these collectable items being modelled, and were obviously expert in spotting badge detail, stockings with seams, and did discuss at length 'what's the right way to wear the Wren's cap?'

"By the same token they took every opportunity to question the RN uniformed ushers, who acted as stewards at the service, about their smart uniforms, their badges, and their medals.

"Association members are always keen to keep themselves informed about the lifestyles of women who are serving today, and it was a privilege for them to see at first hand the modern day desert kit as worn by POAET(M) Becky Webb, who has completed two tours of Afghanistan and is due to be deployed there again in the spring."

And by the by, if you have a uniform in the attic, the Association believes in preserving its WRNS/RN heritage and would be interested to read about any precious keepsakes...

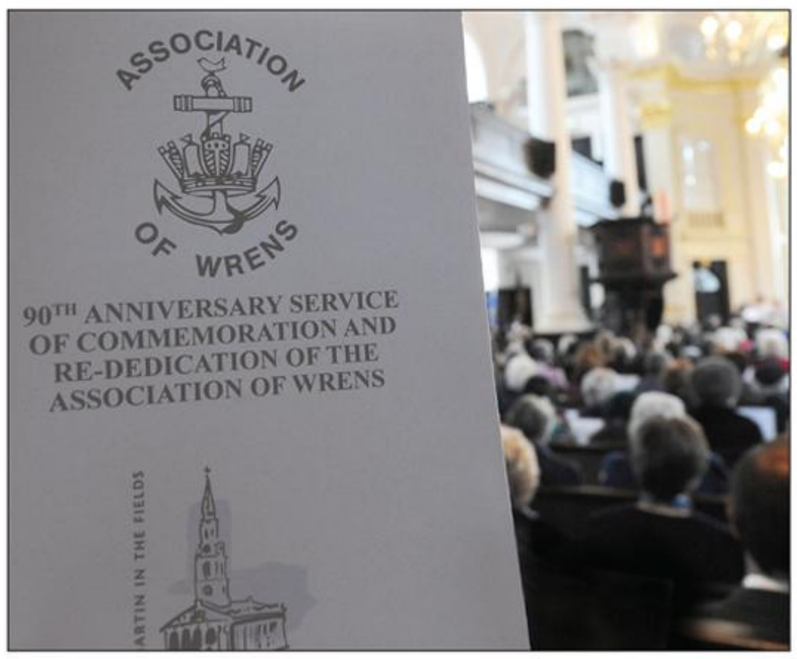
Also attending the service, was First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

"It should come as no surprise that women from the Association of Wrens have long made a valued and important contribution to the UK's Armed Forces, and continue to do so today," said the Admiral, adding that it was an honour to join the Association's patron and some 450 members.

"I am enormously grateful for the wide-ranging support the Association gives both current and ex-serving Wrens and their efforts to keep the spirit of the Service alive across the generations," he said.

The Women's Royal Naval Service was formed in November 1917 to fill shore-based jobs and, as the slogan of the time implored, 'free a man for sea service'.

That allowed more men to undertake active service in ships, and more than 6,000 women answered the call in a variety of roles, including some that had previously been deemed too difficult for women.





Some units were based overseas, such as in Gibraltar, and in the 19 months of its existence the WRNS made a major impact – not least through the fact that 23 women gave their lives for their country.

The Association of Wrens was begun in order for wartime Wrens to be represented on the Service Women's Fund Committee for the distribution of a large grant from the Navy & Army Canteen Board – a rebate of profits from World War 1.

But just as important was their need to keep the spirit of the service alive and maintain friendships.

The first committee meeting was held in December 1920.

Between the wars many ex-Wrens worked with the new Sea Guide (Rangers) units, an initiative put forward by the wartime Director WRNS Dame Katharine Furse.

So when storm clouds gathered again in the 1930s, it was relatively simple to re-form the WRNS, with planning beginning as early as 1938.

By 1944, the Service numbered 74,000 women in 200 different jobs, from planning and organising naval operations to performing maintenance roles.

Thousands of women served overseas and large numbers served in other branches of the Navy, such as the Fleet Air Arm, Coastal Forces, Combined Operations and the Royal Marines (where they were known as mawrens).

During World War 2, the Service lost 303 women.

In July 1940 membership of the Association of Wrens was offered to those currently serving, and when the WRNS was disbanded in 1993 membership was extended to those joining as RN personnel.

The Association of Wrens has become an organisation with a network of branches and small informal groups throughout the UK.

It supports the WRNS Benevolent Trust, issues three magazines a year, has a website (www.wrens.org.uk) and organises regular national reunions and celebrations.

There are currently more than 6,300 members of all ages, including several centenarians, and the Association can also count on a fair representation within the serving members Royal Navy.

New power base for minehunters

ALL Hunt-class warships are to be fitted with new engines and propulsion systems in a five-year £15m overhaul programme.

HMS Chiddingfold will be the first of the Portsmouth and Bahrain-based mine countermeasures vessels to receive new engines, gearboxes, bow thruster systems, propellers and machinery control systems under a contract with BAE Systems.

Her seven sisters will be upgraded during planned ship docking periods over the coming five years, avoiding disruption to their programmes.

The new propulsion systems, which replace a 30-year-old version, are designed to be reliable and easily supportable, using commercial off-the-shelf kit which will not only minimise costs but also ensure spares are readily and widely available.

The new design takes up less space and is more accessible, providing better working conditions for Royal Navy engineers carrying out maintenance and repairs, often in difficult climatic conditions.

The work is due to be carried out at BAE's shipbuilding and overhaul facilities in Portsmouth, and suppliers have already been identified.

Under the contract, which makes BAE the single point of contact for all repair, maintenance and upgrades for the Hunts, Northrop Grumman Sperry Marine will provide the machinery control alarm and surveillance systems, Finning UK will supply engines, gearboxes and bow thrusters, and Stone Marine Propulsion will provide the propellers for the ships.



Picture: Cpl Steve Wood RLC

The stable d'or

AND if you look about 450 miles in that direction, you can see the sea...

Far from her natural environment, Lt Hannah West shares her knowledge on the weapons range to women who've volunteered to serve in the Afghan National Police.

It is this advice – and that imparted by five Senior Service comrades – which helped win a coveted humanitarian award.

The Firmin Sword of Peace – known as Wilkinson for 40 years until sword manufacturers Firmin & Son took over sponsorship – is presented each year to the Forces unit judged to have made the most valuable contribution to humanitarian activities at home or abroad.

In 2010, the tri-Service Military Stabilisation Support Group was deemed worthy of the title.

The 40-strong group largely comprises Army personnel, bolstered by half a dozen sailors and a similar number from the RAF.

Different stabilisation groups deploy to Helmand with each roulement of British forces – in this award-winning instance Operation Herrick 10 (summer 2009).

Once in theatre, the groups are split into smaller teams with responsibilities across the province – helping reconstruction projects, working with locals, government officials, with the aim of making life better for ordinary Afghans.

The six sailors – Lts West and Gary McCormack, Coxn John Adam and CPOs Neil Smith, Wiggy Bennett and Bernie Cresswell – were scattered around Helmand: Lashkar Gah, Musa Qaleh, Nad-e-Ali, Garmsir, Gereshk and Sangin.

As the only female member of the Naval contingent serving with the group, Lt West – an air engineer by trade – was based in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah and was heavily involved in working with Helmand's women.

Under the Taleban the latter suffered terrible oppression – they were stripped of almost all rights, education and dignity, and were barely allowed to appear in public.

Nearly a decade after the Taleban's fall and progress is such that there is now a small, but growing, number of women serving with the Afghan police, there's a government department overseeing women's affairs, and regular *shuras* – meetings – are held to discuss female issues.

Liberated from the Taleban yoke, Helmand's women are no longer shy about voicing their opinions – "they gave the policeman a real grilling" at one *shura*, said Lt West now serving at Abbey Wood on the Chinook project team.

"Women are keen to get involved with the police and work with the provincial councils – especially in the urban areas. It's rather more difficult in the rural parts."

The stabilisation group is formed from full-time and reservist volunteers.

"The job sounded interesting – and it proved to be so very much," Lt West said.

"A lot of the work is about communications, problem solving. If you go into a community, listen to them – take on board what they are saying.

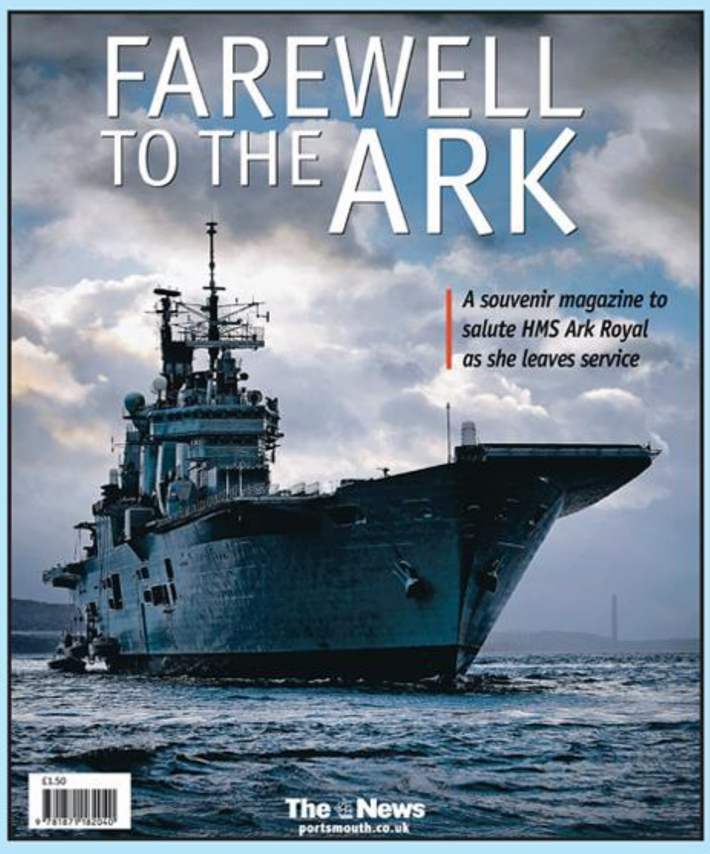
"Everyone in the stabilisation team pitched in, did a fantastic job on the ground.

"There were submariners, a marine engineer, a comms technician – a real cross-section. They built up some great relations with the local community.

"One of the guys was heavily involved with local radio, helping the government to get its message across."

The sword was formally presented to representatives of the stabilisation support group at its HQ in Gibraltar Barracks, Camberley, by Lt Gen Barney White-Spunner, Commander Field Army.

FAREWELL TO THE ARK



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Christmas roughers

MOST submissions featured matelots having a jolly good time above (and occasionally below) the waves, pint (or beer can) in hand, often in fancy dress.

But it's this rather gut-churning image of a routine patrol on December 25 1917 – when there really wasn't much to cheer about after three and a half years of war – which was named the winner of Wood's 100's Old Navy Rum 'Christmas at Sea' contest.

The firm organised the competition to raise awareness of those who are obliged to spend Christmas away from their loved ones due to their commitments in the Armed Forces.

Wood's asked Chris Wild, leading historical image archive blogger at How To Be A Retronaut, to judge the images *Navy News* readers submitted.

He plumped for 'Cambrian Christmas 1917' – supplied by David Clarke from St. Albans – and showing the heavy weather the cruiser endured on the festive day 93 years ago.

"We chose 'Cambrian Christmas 1917' because it so poignantly captivates how lonely it must have been for those fighting in the Great War, as well as their nearest and dearest over the festive period, who would have been out of contact with each other for months on end," Chris explained.

"We hope that this campaign will urge people to give some thought on the 25th December for those soldiers in faraway places."

Mr Clarke has won £500 worth of Bosch Garden and Power Tools.

The complete shortlist of entries can be seen at Chris' website, www.howtobearetronaut.com.



● *Cumberland's CO Capt Steve Dainton leads Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qassimi on a tour of the frigate*

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, FRPU East

Cumberland celebrates 200-year link

AS THE sun rose over the craggy Hajjar Mountains in the picturesque Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, gunfire erupted as a Royal Navy warship made her way into the quiet port...

It sounds like something out of the age of Palmerston and gunboat diplomacy, but in fact it was a greeting to old friends of the British, and particularly of the Royal Navy.

The 21-gun salute was a mark of respect from the Type 22 frigate to the ruling family of the United Arib Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah – some fifty miles along the coast from Dubai.

Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qassimi was welcoming Cumberland on a formal visit, one of many made over the years to celebrate the special links between the Emirate and the British.

The link goes back a long way, to the early 19th Century, when the Sheikh and the British, formerly rivals for power in the Indian Ocean, signed a treaty which hugely enhanced trade and prosperity for both.

Nearly 200 years on, the special relationship was celebrated in a visit which ranged from the formal - an official reception with the British Ambassador to the UAE and the Consul General – to the informal – a football match and a chance for 50 children from local schools to look over the ship.

The Fighting Sausage is the Gulf on Operation Telic duties, having taking over from HMS Somerset safeguarding Iraq's oil platforms and providing wider security for shipping.

P2000 enjoys winter Thor

WEATHER-permitting there'll be a Royal Navy presence in the northernmost town in the British Isles this month.

HMS Archer is leaving the safe confines of Aberdeen Harbour to make the 500-mile round-trip to the Shetlands.

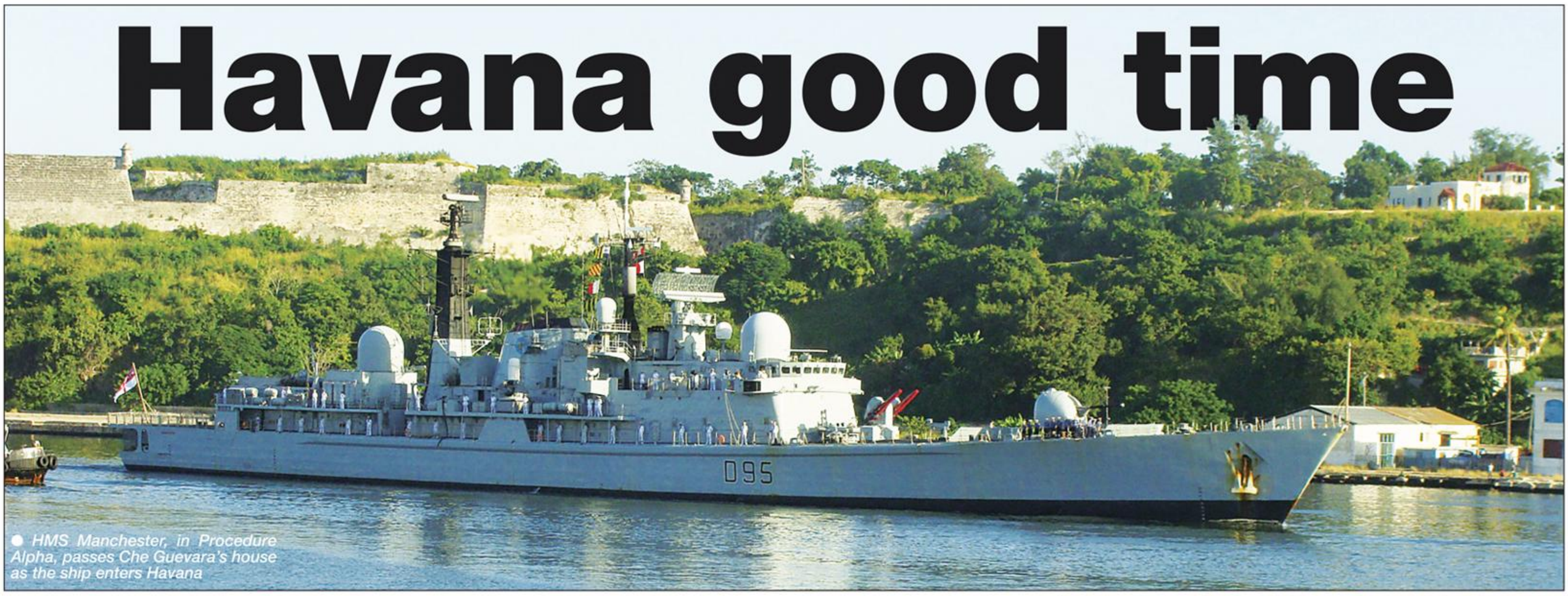
It's the first time in many years that there's been a formal visit by a warship to the remote Scottish archipelago.

Archer, which serves Aberdeen's universities, is taking ten students to the Shetland capital Lerwick.

She's making the pilgrimage to the islands to take part in the world-famous Up Helly Aa winter festival, which culminates in the burning of a ship (not the P2000 but a replica Viking longboat) after dark on the night of January 25-26.

Aside from Archer and her ship's company, this year's spectacle – hailed as Europe's largest fire festival – is due to be attended by Cdre Charles Stevenson, the Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Havana good time



● HMS Manchester, in Procedure Alpha, passes Che Guevara's house as the ship enters Havana

Historic visit for HMS Manchester

THE last Royal Navy ship to go alongside in Havana was commissioned during World War 2 and found a country in the throes of civil strife, with young revolutionary Fidel Castro edging closer to the overthrow of the ruling Batista regime.

So when HMS Manchester became the first ship to fly the White Ensign in a Cuban port since HMS Bigbury Bay in 1957, there was a palpable sense of history in the warm Caribbean air.

The tone of the five-day visit was established early, as the ship arrived to a Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces Guard of Honour and military band, which played both the Cuban and British national anthems.

Waiting on the jetty were the British Ambassador to Cuba, Dianna Melrose, and the head of the Cuban Revolutionary Navy, as well as numerous members of the international and local press.

The main reason for Manchester's visit to Havana was to strengthen the collaboration between the UK and Cuba, in particular on the shared priorities of counter-narcotics work and humanitarian disaster response.

From the moment the destroyer arrived in Cuba, the meetings and events did not stop, with the ship's company being offered numerous opportunities to visit Havana's most famous tourist attractions.

Every ship that visits Havana is requested to lay a wreath at the statue of Cuban national hero Jose Marti and Manchester was no exception.

Accompanying Commanding Officer Cdr Rex Cox was the Ambassador, the Head of the Cuban Revolutionary Navy, the Jamaican-based Defence Attaché and an 18-man marching platoon of British sailors.

Two members of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces laid a wreath at the foot of the statue on behalf of Manchester.

A remembrance service led by Manchester's bish, Rev Mark Allsopp, was held in the Colon Cemetery, a Commonwealth cemetery in Havana in which a number of British and Canadian Service graves lie.

On the first evening, a reception was held on board for invited dignitaries including Cuba's first cosmonaut, General de Brigada Arnaldo Tamayo Méndez.

The spaceman found the Captain's chair particularly to his liking – hardly surprising as it is one of two Aston Martin racing seats built and installed by technicians from the luxury car maker specially for the patrol.

Of the hand-stitched leather seats, Manchester's Commanding Officer Cdr Rex Cox said: "As the driver of a classic lady and sports car of the ocean I am chuffed to bits that HMS Manchester is affiliated with Aston Martin, and am particularly grateful to Aston Martin for marking the affiliation with such style"

Two subsequent receptions were held, the first hosted by the Cuban Ministry of Defence and attended by 20 members of the ship's company attending, while the second was hosted by the Ambassador at her residence.

Another first for the RN was the opportunity to open the ship's upper decks to the Havana public, with sailors on hand to answer questions.

Having been widely publicised in local newspapers and TV and radio broadcasts, queues started building an hour before opening, and around 1,000 people spent some time on the little slice of British sovereign territory in their capital city – such was the demand that opening times had to be extended by 45 minutes to ensure no one was disappointed.

Off-duty sailors took the chance to look at Cuban culture, with the two most popular tours based on the writer Ernest Hemingway and the Cuban cigar and rum industry.

The forts that surround Havana have significant historical significance, and official tours were organised for the ship's company.

These included several re-enactments and a presentation of the cannon fire ceremony that signalled the closure of the city gates at sunset each day during the Spanish occupation of the city.

A competitive football match against the Cuban Naval Academy resulted in a 2-0 win for Manchester.

Cdr Cox said: "It has been an honour to be the first RN warship to visit Havana since before the Cuban Revolution, some 53 years ago.

"We have been looking forward to this visit and have been overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome we received from the people of Havana."

The Ambassador added: "We are delighted that HMS Manchester's visit to Havana was such a success.

"It gave us access to influential military figures, including the chief of the Cuban Navy, and the goodwill created by the visit should help us further counter-narcotics collaboration and wider UK Government objectives.

"The 1,000 or so Cuban members of the public who queued to go on board, as well as British tourists I talked to – and 200,000 or so visit Cuba each year – were delighted to see the White Ensign flying in Havana Bay."



● Cuba's first cosmonaut, General de Brigada Arnaldo Tamayo Méndez, tries out the captain's Aston Martin chair



● Castro turf – POET Robbie Robertson (left) and AB Sam Patterson, in yellow, take on the Cuban Naval Academy



● Smiles all round as HMS Manchester returns to Portsmouth in the sunshine Picture: LA(Phot) Kyle Heller

Warm welcome

A WARM welcome on a cold day awaited HMS Manchester as she entered Portsmouth Harbour at the end of an eventful seven-month deployment to the Caribbean.

Two major drugs busts put the veteran destroyer in the headlines, as did her help in clearing up a St Lucian community battered by Hurricane Tomas.

But there was much more that didn't hit the media – the diplomatic support in island nations around the region, the deterrent effect of anti-narcotic patrols, the work done by volunteers in local communities, to name but a few.

As well as Hurricane Tomas, the destroyer also shadowed predecessors Earl and Igor across the region, using her Lynx helicopter to give island authorities an aerial view of the damage done.

All the while her sailors arranged charity events to collect money for Broughton House in Manchester, a hospice for ex-Service personnel – more than £2,000 has been raised, which will be presented when the ship visits the city shortly.

Commanding Officer Cdr Rex Cox said: "HMS Manchester has had a busy deployment and has been involved in a wide range of tasks from intercepting drugs bound for the UK, to helping the hurricane-battered people of St Lucia in their hour of need.

"The ship's company have performed magnificently and risen to every challenge in the finest traditions of the 'Mighty Manch' and the Royal Navy – I am immensely proud of them."



● Mancs and a Scouser – the destroyer's Guard with the statue of a Beatle in Havana's Parque John Lennon

A FORCE FOR GOOD



Heron in the pink

STAFF at the Command building at HMS Heron arrived at work to the smell of baking when women from the Information Hub got together to organise a cake sale for breast cancer awareness month.

Wearing bright wigs, pink tutus and fairy wings, the women (*pictured*) produced a vast selection of cakes in all shapes and sizes, raising £1,000 for Breakthrough Breast Cancer.



Up and down the peaks

EIGHT colleagues from the Air Traffic Control Tower at RNAS Culdrose completed the Three Peaks Challenge in aid of the RNRMC.

The challenge is to climb the three highest peaks in England, Scotland and Wales in 24 hours.

The team included Lt Cdr Simon Smith, S/Lt Kyle Ross, CPO Mark 'Cookie' Cook, PO Paul Hollyoake and Leading Hand Matt Jones. They completed the climbs in 23 hours 37 minutes, despite having a speed restriction of 62mph on their minibus.

They were supported by Lt Cdr Al Dale, Lt Cdr Malcolm Goram and Lt Cass Edwards. Lt Cdr Smith said: "Adventurous training is designed to test leadership and fortitude and take people out of their comfort zone. Doing the Challenge ticked all those boxes – and even left room for social activity!"

The team has so far raised £500 for the RNRMC.

And a group of aircrew from Culdrose visited the Scilly Isles to help the local Wildlife Trust clean beaches around the islands.

The 15 student aircrew and three instructors from 824 Naval Air Squadron spent three days helping the charity remove rubbish from different beaches and coastlines.

They also helped restore some of the historic buildings, including some of the gun emplacements around the World War 1 garrison at Hugh Town.

The students, who have recently started training on the Merlin Mk1 helicopter, completed the work with the trust as a command, leadership and management exercise in the early stages of their course.

They will now spend the next 12 months learning to fly and operate the Merlin before joining one of Culdrose's three frontline Merlin squadrons.



Sailors get back to nature

SAILORS from HMS Collingwood (*pictured above*) cleared a patch of ground at a school in Fareham to make it ready for a biodiversity garden.

The idea of the garden, at Redlands Primary School, is to teach the children about recycling and wormeries and encourage hedgehogs and other wildlife.

And officer cadets from Campbeltown Division at Dartmouth spent a day clearing the grounds at St John's Primary School, in Totnes.

The team of 23 cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College relaid paths, cleared a stream and covered boardwalks with chicken wire to create a safer surface.

St John's operates as a Forest School, which aims to educate its pupils out of doors as much as possible.

Maintaining the site takes a lot of hard work, and Janet Raby, a staff member, said: "It was a huge help to the school.

"All the cadets worked with such enthusiasm and good humour and simply got so much done."

Deeps take on monster challenge

SEVEN submariners braved harsh Scottish weather, challenging hills and a possible monster when they headed north to take part in two tough road races near Inverness.

Six from HMS Vengeance port were taking part in the River Ness 10k. The seventh, the boat's Lt Ramsay Shaw, was running the Loch Ness Marathon. He managed an impressive time of four hours, two minutes and 17 seconds – a fantastic achievement for his first marathon.

In the River Ness 10k CPO Craig Richardson came 77th in a field of nearly 3,000, while Lt Cdr Mike Smith managed to raise £200 for Help for Heroes.

The others, CPO Craig Richardson, POs Andy Davis, Jamie McCarthy Smith and Dave Prentice, and LET Mark Harrison all finished their race despite harsh weather and steep hills.

And two submarine officers from HM Naval Base Clyde have been raising cash for their local charity, Erskine Hospital, a veterans' charity which provides medical and nursing care for former members of the Armed Forces.

Lts Mike Howarth and Steve Ross both decided earlier this year they would run the Glasgow Half Marathon, despite not being seasoned runners, and started training in earnest.



Their fund-raising venture was summed up in one word – "painful!"

However they both completed the race and raised £500 for Erskine, donated by members of the Faslane Flotilla, naval base workers and friends and family.

"We were both exhausted but completed the half-marathon in just over two hours," said Mike. "It was a wonderful result and made all the aches and pains worthwhile."

Mike, 39, and Steve, 35, are both veteran submariners with the badges to prove it – at the end of October they were presented with their deterrent pins by Prince William at a ceremony at the naval base.

As one of the submariners with the most number of patrols under his belt, Mike's pin was gold, signifying that he had completed 20 or more patrols – a figure which could add up to as much as eight years under the sea.

Steve, currently in HMS Victorious, is still notching up the hours with five patrols and counting.

He was presented with a silver pin, given to those who have done fewer than 20 patrols on the Vanguard class.

Exeter hears eternal voices

A FUNDRAISING concert at Exeter Cathedral in late November has raised over £20,000 for the Royal Marines Charitable Trust (*pictured right*).

The event, featuring the world premier of *Eternal Voices*, completely sold out Exeter Cathedral and drew a standing ovation from its audience of more than one thousand.

Performed by the Band of the Royal Marines, the 80-strong Exeter Festival Chorus and mezzo soprano Alison Kettlewell, the concert featured a range of music including the premier of *Eternal Voices*.

This piece was written in collaboration by Dorset poet and lyricist Ben Kaye and composer Adam Gorb.

Ben spent many months researching the words to celebrate the return of the Royal Marines from Afghanistan and to commemorate the fallen, including time with the family of Lt John Thornton RM who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2008.

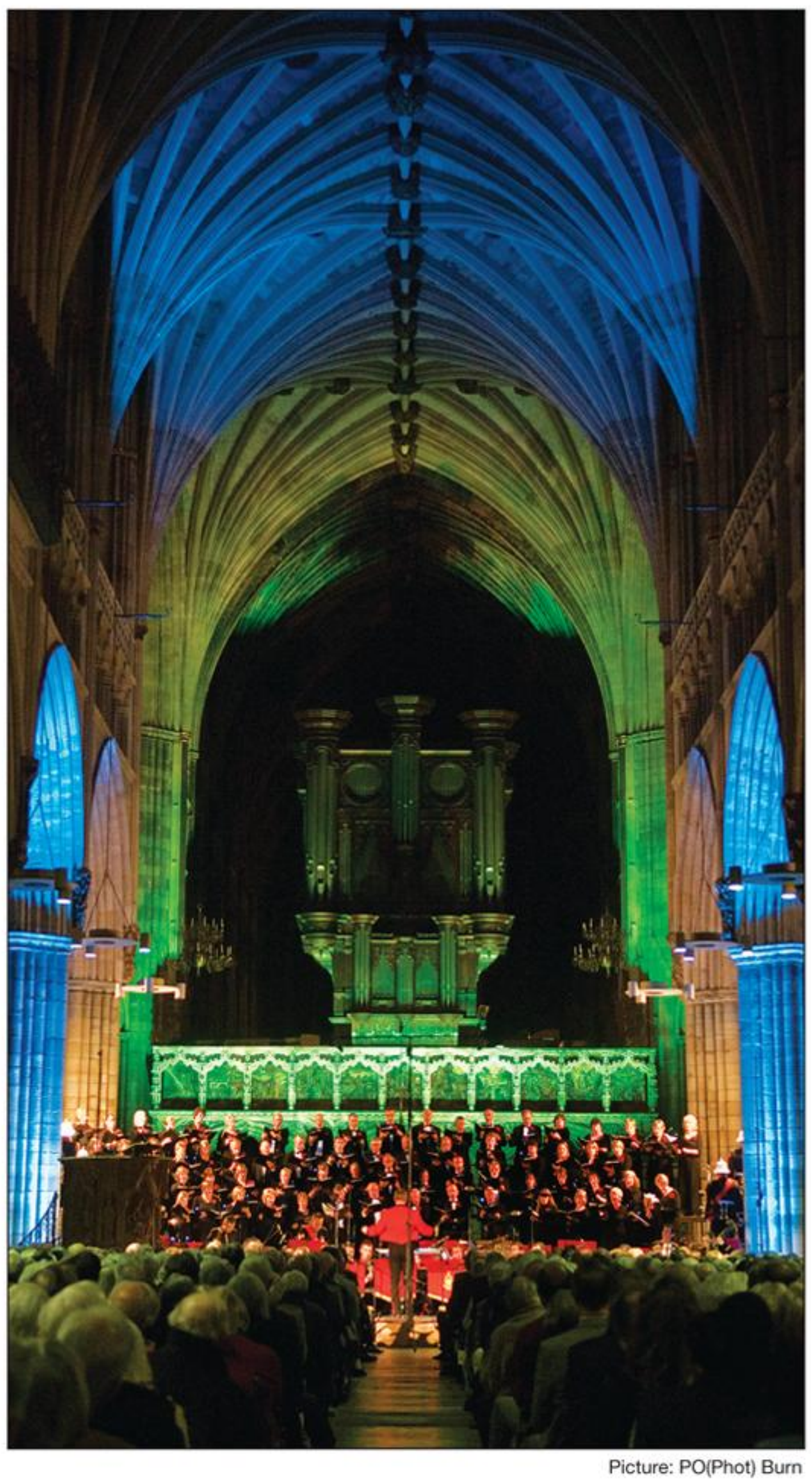
Ben said: "John's war diary was inspirational, and his entirely realistic appreciation of 'rolling the dice' and 'the numbers game' of war was particularly chilling.

"Having sat in my study night after night trying to distil so many stories into a coherent narrative that could be understood by such a diverse audience, the evening itself finally revealed that I had indeed struck a chord for The Forgotten.

"For me, the success of the work was not in the sell-out capacity crowd nor in the standing ovation, but in the very precious time during the concert in which I was reunited with those bereaved families.

"Those moments meant more to me than anything. I will never forget them."

The poet and composer are hoping to reprise *Eternal Voices* this year, and a live recording of the concert will be available on CD.



Picture: PO(Phot) Burn

Academic marathon

STUDENTS from Bristol University raised nearly £500 for the RNRMC with a marathon relay from Bath to Bristol.

The students, all member of Bristol University Royal Naval Unit, started their run in Bath and took it in turns to run legs of the course, which took them through Saltford, Keynsham, up to the University of the West of England and down to their unit on Bristol university's campus.

Mid Simon Priestley, who organised the run, said: "Everyone had a great day out and enjoyed the run, despite us running through some 'interesting' parts of Bristol! Our next physical challenge is the Bath Half Marathon in 2011 – bring it on!"

From combats to catwalk

FRESH from their recent service in Afghanistan, Servicemen from RNAS Yeovilton climbed out of their combats and took out their No 1 Bravos (medals, negative swords) and mess undress to turn supermodel for the evening.

The charity fashion show was the brainwave of Elizabeth Everitt, from Quartet Community Foundation. The other charities to benefit were the RNRMC and Help for Heroes.

The clothes were provided by Debenhams and the show was held in the splendid Assembly Rooms, in Bath.

CSgt Pete Wooldridge, from the Commando Helicopter Force, who was one of the models, said: "We don't do this sort of thing very often but it was one of those occasions that made you proud to wear your uniform.

"The warmth and appreciation of the audience was remarkable."

The evening raised more than £5,000 for the charities.

Elizabeth Everitt said: "The whole evening was absolutely stunning and it was wonderful to see all the Servicemen in uniform. It really brought it home to the audience what a tremendous job they do, as well as their sense of fun – they put everything into the evening."

FOSTies drop in to help

KIND-HEARTED sailors from Flag Officer Sea Training in Clyde Naval Base volunteered to help out at Jigsaw's drop-in centre, in Helensburgh, which provides help and support to children with special needs.

The team of 11 sailors spent three days redecorating, shifting piles of junk, and digging out rubble from the garden. Afterwards they brought gifts for the children and their families.

LS Karl Savage approached bosses at FOST's Submarine Command Team Trainer to ask permission to help the charity during his free time.

"My wife Kirsty works for Jigsaw and I have met a few of the children who use their services. I knew the lads at work would be willing to provide some manpower to help refurbish the centre as it's a good cause and a few of the children are from naval families," said Karl.

Voices of St Dunstan's

A CHARITY concert in Brighton in December raised money for St Dunstan's, the charity that helps blind and partially-sighted military veterans.

The evening featured performances by the Brighton Welsh Male Choir and Roedean School choir and orchestra.

The audience enjoyed festive carols as well as performances of Elgar's *The Snow* at St George's Church, Kemptown, with money from ticket sales going to support St Dunstan's work.

Blyth arrive from Rosyth

SIX crew members from HMS Blyth shrugged off the autumnal dampness to run from Rosyth, where their ship was in refit, to the town of Blyth, the minehunter's northeastern spiritual home.

The men covered a distance of 120 miles, and raised almost £3,000 for their charity, the Blyth Valley Disabled Forum.

And naturally, being Naval types, they had to do it the hard way – carrying their own tents, sleeping bags, drinking water and 24-hour ration packs...

The team's efforts were led by the ship's CO Lt Cdr Des Donworth, who was urged on by the ship's dive team Coxswain PO(D) Kris Fenwick, AB(D) Kris Cunningham, AB(D) Stephen Bradley and AB(D) Haydn Serres, and LCIS Marcus Swales.

The team were welcomed into Blyth by the town's mayor and members of the charity, which provides transport in the local area for the disabled, frail and elderly, and offers respite for carers.

Pledge your support online at www.justgiving.com/blythtoblyth.

A veteran's Christmas Carol

THREE ex-Servicemen, including one Naval veteran, who have experienced homelessness at Christmas have joined together to produce *Veterans Voices: A Christmas Carol*.

The short film, where the men revisit their worst Christmases – a bleak beach, in prison and in a car – then look forward to how their lives have improved, was put together by charity Veterans Aid.

The charity's CEO Dr Hugh Milroy said: "We made the film for two reasons. Partly because the men themselves wanted to give something back and send a message of hope to others like them – and partly to set the record straight about what help is available to ex-Servicemen and women who get into difficulties.

"There are more than 5.5 million veterans in the UK, and more than 3,000 charities and support agencies dedicated to helping them. Around 94 per cent of those who leave the Armed Forces make a seamless transition back into civilian life.

"Those who don't seem to attract a disproportionate amount of publicity – perhaps because they don't know who to come to or how to access help.

"That must change and perhaps the experiences of Nigel, Jonathan and Darren can help it happen."

The film will appear on Veteran Aid's website www.veterans-aid.net in due course.

Triton row

RETIRED officer Cdr David Hosking was rowing across the Atlantic as *Navy News* went to press.

The former commanding officer of minehunter HMS Sandown now has a somewhat smaller command, yet he and his Team Hallin ocean rowers are aiming to become the first team to row across the Atlantic in under 30 days.

And as well as beating the transatlantic rowing record, the team are seeking to raise £60,000 for Combat Stress, the Services mental welfare charity.

Find out more online at www.teamhallin.co.uk and pledge your support online at www.justgiving.com/teamtriton.

Every step counts on Gumpathon

SIX runners set out from New York in early September. Six runners arrived in Los Angeles in November. Six runners ran a total of 3,530 miles across America through 16 states, four time zones, three deserts and ten mountain ranges. Over 63 days, one of these men was running. That was the Gumpathon.

First, let us turn to Marine Mark Ormrod, inspiration to the men of Hasler Company and triple amputee; then next to his friend who created the challenge CSgt Damian Todd, a Royal Marine of 20 years standing, and the man who dreamt up the epic Gumpathon plan, named for the eponymous *Forrest Gump*.

Master Gunnery Sgt Charles 'Chunks' Padilla has spent 28 years in the US Marine Corps, but in that time managed to complete the Royal Marine Mountain Leader Course and the All-Arms Commando Course; in comparison Marine Jamie Jobson is a mere stripling with three years service in the Royal Marines.

Cpl Lloyd 'Crazy' Fenner has been a Royal Marine since 2003, and collected 45 Commando's The Sun True Grit Award on behalf of his unit; and SSgt James 'Jim' Mazzoni-Dalton served with the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment from 1998, before transferring into the Army Physical Training Corps as an instructor after six years with the Paras, and can now be found working alongside the Marines at 29 Command Regiment Royal Artillery in Plymouth.

The runners were supported throughout their long journey by SSgt Caroline Wilde REME, Claire Worsley, Kester Jackson and Paul Shearsby.

It was the injury of Mark in Afghanistan on Christmas Eve 2007 that sparked Damian to turn his idea of running across America into reality. And he wanted to take Mark with him.

When Mark was asked to take part initially, he couldn't walk half a mile – but he set himself the challenge to run at least one mile each day during the long transit, and on one day pushed himself to notch up five miles.



● *The Gumpathon team: SSgt Jim Mazzoni-Dalton; Marine Jamie Jobson; Cpl Lloyd 'Crazy' Fenner; CSgt Damian Todd – the man who dreamt up the idea; Master Gunnery Sgt 'Chunks' Padilla USMC; and Marine Mark Ormrod*

"The challenge for me has been tough," he said. "My advice for anyone who has recently been injured is: if you set yourself a goal, don't let anybody tell you that you can't achieve it.

"Because I was told I couldn't walk three weeks after I was injured. And now I am running."

While Mark was pushing himself to beat his daily one-mile target, his teammates were covering between 16 and 24 miles each day, and sometimes pushing themselves even harder to cover personal targets along the way.

The Royal Marine called on people to support his team's epic efforts crossing North America. A message echoed by Jamie in his Gumpathon blog:

"Now to everybody back home we really need your help! I know we're smiling in all of the pictures but trust me we are crying on the inside!

"Every one of us has picked up at least one injury, our bones ache first thing in the morning and last thing at night, we have blisters, shin splints, clicking ankles and knees, bruised heels, colds…

"The list could go on but I'll round it up by saying we're all hurting, but all of this will be in vain if we don't raise as much money as we can for our chosen Service charities.

"Nearly everybody knows somebody who is, or has served, in the Armed Forces at one time in their lives, these people fight for our freedom so we can all sleep safe in bed at night.

"They never ask for anything in return even though some of them have come home severely injured from war, missing limbs, loss of their sight, loss of their hearing, receiving brain injuries and some Service personnel haven't made it home at all.

"We all have personal feelings on situations but we are not here to pass judgement or start debates.

"We are here to return hope to so many lives, to help families and friends who have found themselves in the worst possible circumstances.

"We are here to make a change and that is where we need you."

The charities that will benefit from the UK and US Marines fundraising efforts are: the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund; Help for Heroes; and the Semper Fi Fund for injured US Marines.

YOU can pledge your support by texting GUMP to 70800 to donate £5 or online at gumpathon.com.



The King sings

THE King isn't dead. He's just living in Devonport.

The King (*pictured*) – aka Elvis impersonator CPO Gary Stones of FOST – wows the crowd at a stunning fund-raising night for Service charities at HMS Drake.

Some 750 guests crammed in to Wyvern Sports Centre for a varied evening's entertainment provided by sailors and Royal Marines who have honed their talents in mess decks, flight decks and establishments down the years.

And while the acts wowed on stage, 40 trainee sailors from HMS Raleigh waited on the tables, raffle tickets were sold and a cocktail bar also raised funds, while palm and tarot card readers and magicians moved among the tables; the performers gave their services free of charge.

Guests included FOST Rear Admiral Chris Snow, Plymouth's Mayor Cllr Mary Aspinall, and, er, Nasty Nick from *EastEnders* (aka John Altman).

Apart from the frivolity there was a more serious reminder of why the audience were there.

Guest of honour – and the evening's speaker – was WO1 Matt Tomlinson RM, who earned the Military Cross for saving comrades in Afghanistan (and the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for his actions in Iraq).

By the time the applause had faded, some £12,000 had been raised for Help for Heroes, Royal Naval and Royal Marines Charities and the Corps' Hasler Company, which helps injured green berets return to fitness and active duties.

For all the acts, the event was a huge step up in terms of the large-scale audience," said organiser WO Neal Frame.

"They all performed brilliantly on the night in front of the appreciative guests. The amateur performers all gave up their time and services free of charge and would only take travel expenses as recompense."

Jane keeps on walking



WALKER Jane Carter (left) has presented £900 to Hasler Company at HMS Drake.

She said: "I chose to support Hasler because they are a local deserving cause in the south-west.

"We hear a lot about the Marines and what a good job they do in Afghanistan.

"I also like walking and was looking for a new challenge to raise my fitness levels and for a focus. I know the Marines also have to be very fit, so it fits in with their profile.

"So I chose Hasler Company and the challenging South West Coastal Path from Minehead to Plymouth.

"I walked 411 miles in chunks over time between April to October. There were lots of hills. The longest period I walked for was eight days. The total was 35 days walking."

Marine Aaron Mearns accepted the donation, saying: "There are many uses the money can be put to, but ultimately it will all go to help us on our way individually."



Seafarers help Santa

SANTA Claus has a new mode of transport (*pictured above*) in the Royal Alfred Sleigh...

Charity the Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society has sent its mystery Santa on the rounds around Surrey to bring some festive warmth and cheer to the residents of the Society's care home.

Despite the havoc caused by the abrupt arrival of snowfall in the south, Santa was not delayed as he could call on the help of the Royal Alfred Sleigh, a new 4x4 Landrover.

RASS chief executive Cdr Brian Boxall-Hunt said: "After the challenges we faced in 2009, the Royal Alfred Sleigh is an essential way to ensure we can continue to maintain the high standard of care for our residents.

"Both staff and the local community have faced a difficult few weeks with deteriorating weather and so what better way to spread a spot of Christmas cheer than by Santa driving our Royal Alfred Sleigh.

"We know that the estate can survive independently in such conditions, and the medical, emotional and social needs of all our seafarers are met as normal, which is what counts.

"Spreading a little Christmas cheer along the way helps and you can't help but smile when you see Santa and his Royal Alfred Sleigh."

The Society provides 56 beds for nursing care and 22 sheltered flats.

Wave Ruler helps Grenada charity

A FUNDRAISING day on board RFA Wave Ruler during their current deployment has helped out a Caribbean charity.

After the day's fundraising, the crew presented US$600 to the J J Robinson Trust in Grenada, which supports students from disadvantaged backgrounds to continue their studies.

The Trust's president Mrs Jean Robinson invited Wave Ruler's 3/O Flint and 2/O Fuller to visit one of the projects that the charity supports.

The Programme for Adolescent Mothers gives teenagers the opportunity to continue their education despite being expelled from school once pregnant. In addition to core subjects such as English and Mathematics, the school offers programmes in food and nutrition, and clothing and textiles.

Funding comes from the government, UNICEF and other agencies, but the extra money will go to provide up-to-date textbooks, repair the leaking school roof, and provide a bigger nursery facility.

A Fort fo

TAKE one support ship with 100 RFA sailors aboard.

Add one Merlin with eight air and ten ground crew, plus two commando snipers.

Load two RIBs, two ORCs and two inflatables plus crew and specialist boarding teams from the Fleet Protection Group RM.

Staff the hospital with 18 medics and surgical staff.

Build a brig on the poop deck.

Put a Royal Marines colonel in charge of all 265 souls aboard.

Send it to the Horn of Africa.

Chalk six pirate action groups.

After 87 days the counter-piracy surge codenamed Operation Capri, spearheaded by RFA Fort Victoria, has come to a close.

With each success – normally ending with a pirate mother ship (typically a whaler) blown to smithereens and their chastened crew sent scurrying back to Somali shores – another set of skull and crossbones was painted on Fort Vic's bridge wing.

Success No.6 came off Hobyo, some 300 miles north of the Somali capital Mogadishu and an infamous hotbed of brigandage.

In the fading light of the last Sunday in November, Pioneer spied a whaler packed with fuel and pirates, ready to set out on a raid.

As darkness fell and the pirates put to sea, the auxiliary shadowed the action group.

When the supply ship appeared out of the blackness, the Marines quickly surrounded the pirate whaler which was now towing two smaller vessels – the typical make-up of a pirate action group – supported by the helicopter's sniper team. The pirates capitulated immediately, throwing their weapons into the sea, before being temporarily detained on RFA Fort Victoria.

After 24 hours onboard – a detention area was built on the poop deck to hold them – the pirates were let ashore off the Somali coastline.

"The pirates have changed their tactics in light of our patrols but we have been able to detect and destroy their equipment and have prevented further piracy attacks," said Capt Rob Dorey RFA, Fort Victoria's CO.

His ship – and the now-departed HMS Northumberland which has sailed home after eight months away – come under the command of Col Mark Gray, the first time a Royal Marine has commanded a naval task group in nearly a decade.

The colonel dismisses all romantic Hollywood notions of parrots, patches and peg-legs. He uses adjectives such as 'dastardly' and 'ruthless' to describe his foe. To catch them, he says, relies upon "cunning, persistence, patient professionalism", supported by "painstaking intelligence analysis."

At Col Gray's disposal are green berets of the Fleet Contingency Troop – specialists in boarding ops – plus a couple of Offshore Raiding Craft (think tooled-up 'super RIB'), two RIBs and two inflatable raiding craft, and one Pioneer.

Pioneer?

That's the callsign of Fort Vic's Merlin, which is the lynchpin of counter-piracy mission and has clocked up an average of 100 hours in the skies per month.

"The engineers have certainly put in the hours to keep the aircraft running and available – even more critical at times when it was the only avail helicopter in the area," said pilot Lt Larry Smit 820 NAS.

"The Merlin brings a great deal to the party. its long endurance and high speed, it has an influ over a wide area."

Pioneer's crew of pilots, aircrew, RM snipers LA(Phot) Al Macleod used the Merlin's radar, ele optic camera, Orange Reaper radar detector, eyeball and camera lens to scour the sea 'pirate action groups' – typically a whaler two or three skiffs in tow.

Which is like trying to find a needle in proverbial... The piracy danger area co 1.1 million square miles of ocean – n than 11 times the size of the UK.

Alternatively, you can keep an eye on known pirate camps and wait for the brigands to come out to play.

Which they've done. With some regularity.

In the last two weeks of November alone, ships attached to NATO's Operation Shield mission – which has included both Fort Vic and HMS Montrose – thwarted half a dozen pirate attacks. Over that same period, the European Union anti-piracy halted four attacks (but sadly couldn't stop the Malaysian contai ship MV Albedo being seized 900 miles off Somali coast).

Indeed, as of the beginning of last month pirates still held 22 vessels – and more than mariners.

"It should not be assumed that we are dealing a disorganised bunch of rogues," says Capt Dore

So to stop organised rogues you need an organ constabulary.



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Now it's been running for a good three years, the international effort is a well-oiled machine.

In Fort Victoria's case there were some 1,000 e-mails a day flying between the ship and the mother country, plus signals, imagery, phone calls and radio conversations.

The cooks and stewards were expected to provide 'hotel services' for 265 men and women every day – as well as wear other hats, or rather helmets.

A sizeable number of Fort Victoria's stewards also provide force protection, manning machine-guns, the Minigun and 20mm Gambo; the rest serve as stretcher bearers and first aiders when the ship goes to action stations.

Now you might be wondering why there's a fully-staffed hospital aboard.

Well, with the pirates being trigger happy, there was always a chance that someone – seafarers, hostages, commandos or even the pirates themselves – might be injured.

So the hospital facility was staffed with 18 experts from across the RN Medical Service, plus one radiographer from the Army equivalent, the RAMC.

The result was a 'mini ER' with the latest X-ray kit, sterilising machines, blood banks and the like.

The aim was to provide any wounded with the same care as they might expect in Afghanistan – the Horn of Africa is classed as an operational theatre.

In theory, a team of two – one medical assistant, one emergency nurse practitioner – would deal with a casualty.

In serious cases, they would pass them on to one of two 'trauma bays' in Fort Vic's sickbay, where the trauma-team – led by an A&E consultant – would quickly assess the patient's injuries before acting.

The ship has an operating theatre for emergency procedures, plus two intensive care beds. Once stabilised after treatment, casualties would be transferred ashore by helicopter, then on to the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham courtesy of the RAF.

Thankfully, they didn't have to put it into practice.

Even though there was no need to patch up casualties, the hospital's stocks had to be replenished on a regular basis – blood has a limited 'shelf life'.

Fresh stocks came via the Seychelles; the idyllic Indian Ocean archipelago has become the eye of the piratical storm, serving as the hub for naval operations in the region with all manner of spare parts, food and other essentials flown into the islands, while two out of five sailors aboard Fort Vic were changed over during port visits.

Those infrequent visits to the Seychelles have also permitted some rare downtime for the engines, if not for the marine engineers, who've used the time in port to shut down machinery and carry out essential maintenance.

Their exertions, like all aboard, ensure that the whole effort is greater than the sum of its parts.

"The whole team has done a cracking job – the ship's been at full capacity," says Capt Dorey.

"It's been hard work and has involved long and far-from-routine hours."

The wider RN and RM community have been introduced to RFA operations on a daily basis... and vice versa.

"Everyone in Fort Victoria can be rightly proud of what they've achieved, but piracy in the region will not be solved overnight," Capt Dorey adds.

Most of the Capri team aboard – and their kit – are homeward bound. But not Fort Victoria.

The one-stop support vessel is now in the Gulf fulfilling the role of tanker for Allied warships.











pictures: la(phot) al macleod, frpu north

COMMENT

Royals are not the masters

I AM just writing after an article appeared in December's *Navy News* titled 'Royals are indoor masters'.

I would like to point out that the quickest time of the day was by myself, PO(AWT) Buster Brown RN and *not* Mne Brown.

This has cost me a bell-ring in the mess. The one time I appear in the *Navy News* you get my service wrong!

I know this is not your fault and I will email the PTI over at HMS Sultan.

– **PO(AWT) Buster Brown,** HMS St Albans

Ding dong again, but at least you've been in Navy News *twice now – Ed*

Phoenix from the ashes

I WONDER if your readers would be interested in the efforts of the Phoenix Think Tank which attempts to educate the public and especially members of Parliament in the need for a maritime strategy for the United Kingdom?

The recent Strategic Defence and Security Review shows how little the maritime aspects of this island and its critical dependence on sea-borne trade for its food, fuel and raw materials, is understood.

Or that the oceans offer a freedom of manoeuvre, flexibility and diplomatic advantage that land-based forces cannot achieve in the protection of our overseas territories and support of our allies.

The Phoenix team is a collection of concerned people who feel strongly that the case for the Naval Service is too often overlooked by events in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

To help them they have a website: http://thephoenixthinktank.wordpress.com/about/

There is also a petition to save the Harrier which your readers may wish to sign up to.

It is: www.savetheharriers.com

Capt Michael C Clapp Ret'd, Totnes, Devon

Good show from the RAF

I must complain about a comment in your article *Trophy Lives* (p37, November); you stated that the RAF were unable to provide cover for Force Z.

Admiral Phillips had left his Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Palliser (I believe) ashore to liaise with the RAF for air cover, but in fact he had never sent any signals giving his position or requesting air cover.

Once they came under attack and Force Z's position became known, RAF/RAAF aircraft were immediately sent out, arriving just as the Japanese aircraft were leaving, with both Prince of Wales and Repulse sinking.

I don't believe it was any fault of the RAF.

– **John Keating,** ex RN/RAN, Rockingham, Australia



● *Tony Mardel-Ferreira and (presumably) his pilot on board HMS Nubian after the ditching. His Swordfish of 819 Squadron crashed shortly after taking off from HMS Illustrious. He and S/Lt D A Wise were rescued by the destroyer and the crash was later found to have been caused by contaminated fuel (photo kindly lent by Mrs Mardel-Ferreira from her late husband, Joe's, collection)*

Heroes of Taranto

I WAS most interested to read your supplement on Taranto and have sent copies to various members of my late husband's family.

My own interest is that the brother-in-law I never met, S/Lt Tony Mardel-Ferreira, took part as an observer in the raid and was killed in a subsequent bombing.

I'm sure people know that it was three of Illustrious' Swordfish, rather than Eagle's, that ditched shortly before the raid. He was in one that ditched. He was mentioned in despatches.

He was in the wardroom when HMS Illustrious was bombed off Malta on January 10 1941, and was killed outright.

– **Liz Mardel-Ferreira,** Havant, Hants



A £25 Amazon voucher to Mrs Mardel-Ferreira for the letter which moved and enlightened us the most

...ONE significant target was omitted from your excellent supplement on Taranto (November) – the seaplane base.

The Admiral in charge of aircraft carriers, Rear Admiral Arthur Lumley St George Lyster, whilst drawing up plans for the attack, used the valuable knowledge and experience he had gained in 1917, when he was flying seaplanes out of Taranto.

As Lt Cdr Lyster he had set up the 'English Camp' with Wing Captain Arthur Longmore. Both were awarded the Order of the Crown of Italy for their services during World War 1.

In 1938 Lyster, now captain of HMS Glorious, with orders from Admiral Fisher, revisited plans for an attack on Taranto (first drawn up in 1935) and started training his aircrew in night-flying and attacking ships in harbour.

He used the Grand Harbour at Malta for his exercises, where the noise of Fairey Swordfish flying low over the harbour kept the locals awake at night.

The Italian reconnaissance seaplanes flying out of Taranto were a constant worry to the British fleet, as they reported on every ship and its movements.

Admiral Cunningham wanted the seaplane base, just east of the town of Taranto in the Mar Piccolo, destroyed.

Therefore some of the bomb-carrying Swordfish were given the seaplane base as their target.

Six bombs found their target, scoring direct hits on hangar and slipway and adjacent building.

The Vulcan bomber may look impressive, but it is the Fairey Swordfish that stirs my blood, a magnificent sight – a magnificent biplane.

Seeing it making a flypast on Remembrance Sunday at Lee-on-Solent Fleet Air Arm Memorial after several years being 'grounded' was a welcome sight.

– **Trevor Walhen,** ex-Fleet Air Arm, Basingstoke, Hants

Saviours of the last Ark

SHOULD we be looking at preserving the Ark Royal?

The Americans have an aircraft carrier alongside a Concorde in New York. The carrier is a museum to their Fleet Air Arm. Why not the same here, teaching history?

HMS Cavalier was very nearly sold for £1 to be taken abroad and was saved at the last minute by a lot of devoted people, and look what they have done to her now!

HMS Ark Royal is a working ship in, I suppose, good condition.

What will she be like in ten years' time after every Tom, Dick and Harry has boarded her up the trots at the back of Portsmouth Harbour and nicked this, that and the other?

With corporate hosting, visits, tours, ex-RN Association dinners and visits, etc, Sea Cadet 'live aboard' weekends or a week's training, with the galleys providing meals just as the Historic Dockyards, Severn Valley Steam Railways, the Black Country Museum; it could be done.

Now is the time to set the wheels in motion to form the HMS Ark Royal Trust and save her before it is a desperate bid in ten years' time.

– **Mick Crowe,** RN Shipmates, Sandown, Isle of Wight

...THE aircraft carrier HMS Invincible (95 per cent mild steel) is listed on an MOD website as being for sale by tender.

The page invites prospective purchasers to click "Add to Wishlist" or "Add to Cart." Some cart!

Someone's Christmas wish could have come true for around £2 million but surely one should have been able to click "Add to Sleigh" around this time of year?

– **Lt Cdr Lester May,** Camden Town, London

The quick link is www.edisposals.com *and the page also reassures customers: "Availability: In stock." – Ed*

Navy needs air power

IN THE paragraphs describing the naval service of Captain Eric Brown, (*Heroes of the Royal Navy no 80*, December) you state that the DH Vampire was not a 'dawn', but a 'faltering dawn'.

The dawn would come later, with the Supermarine Attacker.

Surely this is not correct, I was serving in the Far East Fleet, as First Officer in RFAs Retainer and later, in Tideflow, with HM Ships Centaur and later Albion.

Those ships both had Seahawks and Sea Venoms embarked. 806 was one of the squadrons embarked. The date was 1959-61.

Those were the days, the Far East Fleet was bigger than the Navy now, never mind the cuts.

Why does the navy not need air cover now? Surely the RAF cannot do it? They never could.

Three cheers for the Defence Secretary (Roy Mason) who gave us Harriers!

Cdr W T Richardson, RNR Ret'd, Gravesend, Kent

My mystery ships

WHILST serving in the Type 15 A/S frigate HMS Ursa during the Suez campaign I have a memory which seems a bit of a 'lamp swinger' and I'm beginning to doubt my own mind.

Dawn action stations had been piped and we were making our way to those stations when out of the gloom a large number of USN ships appeared on our port beam.

They crossed astern of us, not a soul on deck, no lamp or flag signals, very eerie.

My camera was safe in my locker but would have been too bulky to fit in No 8's pockets so pictures were not taken.

When I recount the story, no one seems to believe it but *I was there and I saw it*! Can anyone remember it or has photos to bear me out?

– **Robin Allum,** RNEBA and Algerines Association member, Whitchurch, Hants

Good view of a surrender

I NOTED with interest the article about the ceremonies marking the end of the war with Japan (September).

Readers might be interested to know that here in Ocala, Florida, we have a veteran who witnessed the formal surrender of the Japanese to General Douglas MacArthur and Allied officers on the deck of the battleship USS Missouri from a particularly good vantage point.

Wayne Riebow, who is a volunteer at our local veterans' park, was a gunner on the Missouri, and watched the signing of the surrender documents from his action station four decks above the ship's quarterdeck.

Riebow remembers the hush that fell over the ship's company at the moment of the signing, and their joy at knowing they were finally going home.

Riebow is a good friend of this writer, a member of the Royal Navy from 1941-46.

The Missouri, chosen for the great occasion because Missouri was President Truman's home state, escaped the breaker's yard, and is now a museum at Pearl Harbor.

– **Kenneth Tipper,** Ocala, Florida

History's silken threads

THE picture outside HMS Calliope (p31, October) took my eye, as my wife's grandfather, Harry Baker, was the Chief Shipwright (Chippy) aboard Calliope during the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

He finished his time to pension in 1927, and was recalled back to service in WW2 where he was in charge of repairing boats at Sheerness.

HMS Calliope was built in Chatham Dockyard before WW1 and crew members were presented with silks of the occasion to mark the launch.

When Harry's wife died and before he moved to Pembroke House in Gillingham, Kent, the old sailors' home, he asked me if I would look after the silk for him.

This I did, and in 2009 I had it framed and gave it to his grandson, John Hay, who presented it to the Chatham Historical Dockyard where it now resides.

– **Thomas Gibney,** Waterlooville, Hants

Tracking down the Writers

NOW that the Writer Branch has reclaimed its historic name, its Writers' Associations are delighted that they need no longer consider changing their titles.

Having previously listed all the Writers on the Plymouth Naval War Memorial, former Chief Writer Graham Jewell, archivist of the Westcountry Association of RN Writers, has now managed to track down details of all Writers killed by enemy action and all Writers who have died through illness or accident while still serving.

Anyone wanting details of deceased Writers can obtain them from dgrahamjewell@yahoo.co.uk or 35, Broad Walk, Saltash, PL12 4NT

– **Graham Jewell,** Saltash, Cornwall

Facing a legendary man

I THINK Bob Styants in *Legendary Men* (*letters*, November) is referring to Lt Cdr Andrew who was the gunnery officer at Raleigh and Collingwood. We called him 'Shovel-Face' but, out of necessity, never to his face.

Upon having my leave chit stamped 'leave on draft' and my pusser's suitcase and my kitbag in tow, I happened to be confronted by him on my exit from White City.

What will I do? I can't chop him one off? So I politely said: "Good afternoon, Sir."

At which point he made me retreat ten marching paces and smartly 'eyes left' in due deference to his authority.

I'd still stand him a wet.

– **Nobby Clark,** ex CPOMEA, Portsmouth

opinion

TELLING the readers of *Navy News* off for being 'sea-blind' would be like the apocryphal vicar who used to tell off his congregation because not enough people turned up.

Our readers don't need to be told that we need a powerful Navy, that 80 per cent of international trade goes by sea, and that the oceans are increasingly being used by terrorists, pirates, criminals and insurgents.

But 'sea-blindness' persists among the British public. It is still one of the major barriers to the acceptance that we need a strong Navy, with all the costs that ensue.

So it is good to read the speech given by the Defence Secretary, Dr Liam Fox (highlights of which are on page 4).

The Secretary of State left his listeners in no doubt that a strong Navy is one of his priorities.

The future, as he observed, would require the Royal Navy "more than perhaps in recent decades".

Not, perhaps, a cheering prophecy, but probably a very accurate one.

And in the midst of our poignant farewell to the Ark and her Harriers, it is reassuring that Dr Fox pledged that from 2015, the Royal Navy would rise anew.

The Queen Elizabeth carriers, the Joint Strike Fighter, the Type 45s, the Type 26 Global Combat ship, the Astute-class submarines – all represent a brighter future and naval assets which will be crucial to this country's security.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

NAVY NEWS

Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH

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Editorial
Managing editor: Sarah Fletcher 023 9272 4194
Editor: Mike Gray 023 9272 5136
News editor: Richard Hargreaves 023 9272 4163
Production editor: Helen Craven 023 9272 5067
Fax 023 9283 8845
edit@navynews.co.uk

Business
Business manager: Lisa Taw 023 9272 0494
Subscriptions 023 9272 6284
subscriptions@navynews.co.uk
Accounts 023 9272 0686
Advertising 023 9272 5062
advertising@navynews.co.uk
Fax 023 9273 4448
General enquiries and archives: 023 9272 5061/5064



Paying homage in Souda Bay

YOUR readers may remember that at the age of 92, I and my 'carer', former Royal Marine Cdo David 'Barney' Clifton, travelled north of the Arctic Circle to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Second Battle of Narvik and to place poppy wreaths on the cold waters above HMS Hunter and flowers on the graves of Capt Warburton-Lee and his gallant shipmates.

We felt neglected by Whitehall, there was not a White Ensign in sight on the anniversary of the battle in which we lost four destroyers but in two engagements sank all eight of the enemy's finest ships.

This must not happen next May, when Greece will be commemorating the evacuation of the island of Crete.

The British Admiralty has to remember that in a very short time 54 of our finest ships were attacked by more than 400 assorted dive and fighter bombers. It was a catastrophe.

In all, ten of our finest ships were sunk, more than 23 were seriously damaged and worse still, there were more than 2,000 deaths in the fleet.

On the plus side, through the gallant efforts of our cruisers, destroyers and capital ships, tens of thousands of Commonwealth troops were taken to the safety of Alexandria. It is said that Andrew Cunningham wept as he watched his battered ships enter the harbour.

Next May, as the representative of York RN and RM Associations and another year older (93) I shall place my wreath on the lawns of Souda Bay. It would be a bonus if my lords of Admiralty and those in power could be there to say 'thank you' to all those such as the Kelly (whose former captain must have a bit of a push in naval circles...) and see that at least one White Ensign flies over the waters of Souda Bay.

Shipmate Bernard Hallas, former gun captain of HMS Warspite, Haxby, York

Ivor lesson you won't forget

MIKE Crowe, of the Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association, appealed to readers in *Ask Jack* (October) for the name of the Electrical course instructor in Chatham who hated the word bulb – 'it's a lamp, a LAMP!'

The story brought a smile and the memory of hot summer afternoons in 1959 at Devonport gunnery school where I was on a Fire Control course.

We were undergoing electrical instruction in a hot, stuffy classroom, the sun streaming through the windows.

Our instructor was a naval pensioner, ex-Leading Torpedoman Ivor Clapworthy. (Up to 1945 Torpedomen were the ship's electricians.)

The particular subject was the study of power magslip transmission (a mechanical/electrical system of receivers and transmitters that moved gunlayers' pointers for range and deflection).

When it came to some tricky technical points, and there were quite a few, Ivor would start almost every sentence with "Now, by virtue of the fact..." Often we would ask questions. His reply would more often than not be "By virtue of the fact..."

He must have said this short phrase umpteen times during each period of instruction.

He is remembered for another reason in that Ivor had the patience of a saint, and would go over again and again any point that we found difficult to understand.

This part of the course always took place during the afternoons, after tot time and dinner when eyelids would become heavy.

At the conclusion of each lesson, Ivor hoped we learned something that afternoon.

Then with a broad smile on his face he would say: "Sorry to keep you awake, gentlemen," which always brought a class full of grins.

I have to record that all 16 members of class 102 of FCTwo's obtained high marks for theory and practice of electronics, down to enthusiasm and the in-depth tuition of Mr Clapworthy.

Strangely, no other instructor's name is recalled from the six-month course, perhaps they didn't have any pet sayings, but all remember Ivor Clapworthy, whom we christened "by virtue of the fact".

– Eddie Summerfold, Hon Secretary, HMS Opossum Association, Bury, Lancs

Scott's pole intent

THE article *Pole Position* (August, page 11) about Captain Scott's famous race to the South Pole with Roald Amundsen is the story I have known since I was a boy.

However, I am convinced I read a different version within the last few months.

In this version, Capt Scott's expedition was commissioned by the Royal Geographic Society and long-planned. Its main aim was geological surveying and reaching the Pole was almost incidental.

At the same time, Amundsen had been planning to be the first at the *North* Pole.

However, on hearing of the (nowadays questionable) achievement of Robert Peary in reaching that pole first, Amundsen announced that he would switch his expedition to the South Pole. This was felt a very ungentlemanly thing to do even amongst his fellow countrymen.

As a result, Amundsen, with nothing to do other than reach the South Pole(!) created this 'race' with Capt Scott whose journey was built around taking measurements and samples on the way, all part of the work schedule agreed with the Royal Geographic Society.

If this version is the correct one, maybe *Navy News* can refute this 'losing race' aspect and enhance Scott's reputation even more, were that possible!

– David Poole, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol

Von Spee's gloomy prophecy

ADMIRAL von Spee's own response to his defeat of Admiral Cradock's squadron at the Battle of Coronel deserves to be remembered.

When the German ships put in at Valparaíso after the battle, they were fêted by the local German community.

When one non-combatant proposed the toast "Damnation to the British Navy," von Spee's reply was that of a naval officer and a German gentleman: "I drink to the memory of an honourable and gallant foe."

Von Spee knew only too well what the Royal Navy had in store for him. When a lady presented him with a bouquet of flowers, he said: "Thank you. They will do very nicely to mark my grave."

His grave and that of his two sons is the sea off the Falkland Islands.

William Wates, Upper Mall, London

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



PEOPLE

Bob is first Royal in key Faslane post



● Capt Darren Bone

Officer at heart of ISAF HQ

A ROYAL Navy officer has returned home following a twelve-month deployment to Afghanistan which saw him working at the heart of the international effort to stabilise the country.

Capt Darren Bone worked for International Security Assistance Force Commander Gen David Petraeus at the ISAF headquarters in Kabul, setting up a strategic engagement branch to create links between ISAF and the Afghan government.

Capt Bone previously worked on the MOD Afghanistan strategy desk in London and, as part of his role, had visited the country on several short occasions.

He said: "As I had been involved in the strategy for three years it was great to see the tactical side of things.

"It was my first time working on a US Army-led land operation and as a Naval officer I was extremely proud and felt as though we were making a real contribution.

"There are huge complexities in working with 46 different countries who are all trying to achieve the same aim, but I think our team met the challenge extremely well.

"The tour of 53 weeks does sound like a substantial time away but I did get to go home as often as I could – and I kept in regular touch with my family by phone.

"I have only been home now for a few days so I'm looking forward to spending some quality time with them."

Capt Bone will now be taking up a new role at the MOD's Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood following leave.

There are a total of 639 Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel deployed on Operation Herrick in Afghanistan, with the Royal Navy sailors deploying on a one-in, one-out basis.

They are trained at the RN Pre-deployment Training and Mounting Centre at Portsmouth Naval Base, and mainly take on roles in logistics, intelligence, administration and operations.

Officer In Command of the Centre Lt Cdr Pat O'Callaghan said: "These are personnel from across the Navy with specialist skills that are required to serve in Afghanistan.

"They spend four weeks with us learning valuable skills for theatre, some of it very new and very different to what they do on a day-to-day basis in ships and submarines.

"We train up to 80 personnel 12 times a year so there is a constant rotation in the main operating bases, the Forward Operating Bases, headquarters in Kabul and also working with the Afghan National Army."

Planning for Christmas

VISITORS to Portsmouth Naval Base enjoyed a white Christmas – at least for a few minutes.

Initial figures showed that around 23,500 people attended the three-day Victorian Festival of Christmas, and there was the added bonus of the odd flurry of real snow to go along with that produced by machines.

Organisers say the event is going from strength to strength, and bookings are already being taken for the 12th version, on November 25-27 2011.

A ROYAL Marines NCO has become the first green beret to take up a key post at Clyde Naval Base.

WO1 Bob Cawley RM has been appointed Base Warrant Officer at Faslane, although he is not new to the base, having previously served there with Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines several years ago.

Since then Bob has been assigned as the Unit Sergeant Major at Royal Marines Reserves (RMR) Scotland in Govan and most recently served as Command Warrant Officer Royal Marines at Naval Command Headquarters in Portsmouth, working with the Divisional and Regimental Support Team.

"As a Royal Marine I wear a different uniform to most at the base," said Bob.

"But I am always aware of the wider Naval Service and therefore the part we all play towards achieving the collective requirements of that Service.

"In my last job at Naval Command Headquarters I was privileged to get a picture of the much wider Naval Service and believe this has prepared me well for my appointment.

"The Royal Navy is, of course, comprised of four fighting arms – the Surface Fleet, the Submarine Flotilla, the Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Marines.

"I keep that very much in mind, and, while it is a bit of a milestone that I am the first Royal Marine assigned as the Base Warrant Officer, at the end of the day I share the same concerns as many of the sailors and Royal Marines that operate from Faslane."

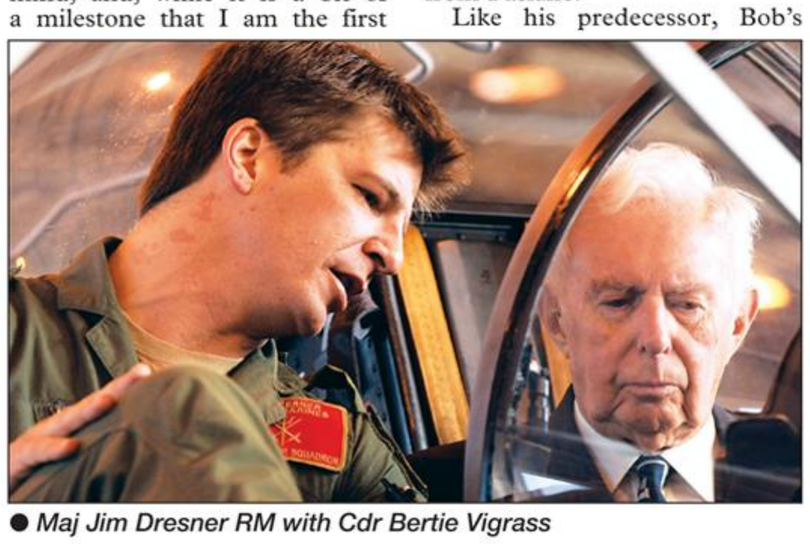


● WO1 Bob Cawley RM, the new Base Warrant Officer at Clyde

Picture: PO(Phot) Ian Arthur RNR

Like his predecessor, Bob's main role will be to act as an information conduit between the Command and the other ranks at the site.

It is an important role which ensures that all personnel get the opportunity to forward their views and concerns to higher echelons of command, and therefore have their chance to influence their future desires, particularly regarding accommodation, catering, retail and leisure facilities at the establishment.



● Maj Jim Dresner RM with Cdr Bertie Vigrass

First and last (for now)

JOINT Force Harrier hosted a special guest for the final Taranto Night at RAF Cottesmore.

Cdr Bertie Vigrass RNR (Rtd) joined the RN for pilot training on November 11 1940 – the day of the raid on Taranto – and joined 829 NAS on his 21st birthday.

Bertie was thus a pilot of the first fixed-wing aircraft flown by the Navy's Fleet Air Arm and oversaw the last Taranto Night for a Naval fixed-wing aircraft – for the time being.

The following day Maj Jim Dresner RM, senior pilot of 800 NAS, showed Cdr Vigrass the cockpit of a Harrier GR9.

The veteran pilot was struck by the complexity of it, remarking that one of the worst things that could happen in a Swordfish was for the Observer to drop his pencil over the side which meant he could not maintain the plot board to find the carrier again...

Visitor of note

HMS HURWORTH'S sponsor has paid a visit to the ship almost 27 years after her launch.

Lady Hallifax was the wife of Admiral Sir David Hallifax, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, when the ship went down the slipway in 1984 – her husband, who died in 1992, went on to become Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle.

He was also Chief of Staff at Northwood when Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in 1982, and went on to organise the staff for the resultant tri-Service operation to retake the islands – an episode which he later recalled as one of his greatest professional challenges.

The visit to the ship comes shortly after Hurworth's sailors visited the minehunter's namesake hunt in North Yorkshire to reacquaint themselves with their affiliates.

Lady Hallifax was given a tour of the ship and briefed about her recent deployments to the Gulf, as well as being given an idea of the schedule ahead.

The Hunt-class ship's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Richard Goldstone, said Lady Hallifax was a very keen supporter and "one of the leading authorities on the ship's career so far."

He added: "This is a very important event for us and we have been looking forward to seeing her, showing her around the ship and strengthening the ties with our ship's sponsor."



● Lady Hallifax tests the miniature hunting horn she presented to HMS Hurworth in 1984

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby

Pilot rewarded for mercy dash

NAVY pilot Lt Pete Higgins has been awarded a Green Endorsement, the Fleet Air Arm's highest commendation, for his part in a mercy dash off Africa.

Lt Higgins was deployed for seven months with 217 Flight, 815 Naval Air Squadron, on board HMS Chatham, conducting anti-piracy patrols off Somalia.

In mid-February a distress call from a merchantman requested help for a sailor with intense abdominal pain – the man required life-saving surgery.

Chatham's Lynx was undergoing maintenance, but Lt Higgins, as Flight Commander, ordered the aircraft to be made serviceable as soon as possible.

On start-up it was discovered that the cyclic trim was unserviceable – this device makes it much easier for the pilot to operate the helicopter smoothly.

But because of the urgent nature of the mission, and after careful consideration and discussion, they took off.

The upper deck of the freighter was cluttered and cramped, and the sea caused it to pitch and roll badly, but the patient was lifted from the ship and transferred ashore via the frigate.

Lt Higgins said: "I knew that we had to attempt the casualty evacuation or the patient would have died.

"We just got on and did our job and I am honoured to be receiving this endorsement for my part in what was a whole team effort."

Lt Higgins recently joined the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) organisation where he has taken up an appointment as a Senior Warfare Officer.



● Lt Pete Higgins RN receives his Green Endorsement from Brig Mark Noble RM, Commanding Officer of HMS Heron

Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan, RN Photographer of the Year



● Joseph Latizia at Dartmouth with Commander BRNC, Cdr Andy Hancock

Picture: Craig Keating, VT Flagship

Filling in the gaps at BRNC

THE history of Britannia Royal Naval College and the training of officers in the Senior Service is well recorded, including the evacuation of cadets to Eton Hall in Cheshire following Luftwaffe bombing raids in September 1942.

There are, however, some gaps in that history, particularly for the period when BRNC served as the US Navy HQ from December 1943 in the run up to D-Day.

But now College Archivist Dr Jane Harrold has spent an afternoon in the company of former Third Bosun's Mate Joseph Letizia, of Connecticut.

Joseph joined BRNC a few weeks short of his 18th birthday in January 1944 and was part of the third wave on to Utah Beach that June, in charge of a 50ft LCM.

"Joseph is an amazing gentleman whose vivid recollections of his time spent in the college have certainly helped in painting the picture of life here during that time," said Dr Harrold.

"As we recorded our conversations during his time here we have something to actively archive."

His visit had been arranged by Roberta McCarthy, the VT Flagship college tours administrator.

"Joseph's first observation when he arrived was actually how many more trees there were in the grounds," said Mrs McCarthy.

"There were obvious moments of very personal reflection, but it was fun to hear him speak of the wonderful jelly tarts and apple turnovers from a local bakery he used to enjoy, particularly if he missed breakfast.

"He certainly had a soft spot for the WRNS personnel billeted in Dartmouth, too."

Joseph met the Commander of the college, Cdr Andy Hancock, during his visit.

"Everyone has made me so welcome and that is how I remember Dartmouth in 1944 and it was such a privilege to be here both then and now," said Joseph.

"The college doesn't appear to have physically changed that much, but the town seems so much bigger now."

Diploma time

PERSONAL development is a buzzword in the RN these days, as the Royal Naval School of Marine Engineering has demonstrated.

Capt Graham Watts presented nine members of his staff at HMS Sultan with their BTEC Level 5 Diplomas in Professional Management certificates.

Having sat through a day of lessons including identifying skills for effective time management, what makes a winning team and how to manage a budget, a group of about 30 from across RNSME and the Nuclear Department were working towards their diplomas.

Wessex Business School identified the prior learning that each individual had completed in the RN and used this to reduce the number of modules required to obtain the qualification, which now gives these members access to gain a masters degree.

War graves project widens its remit

BACK in 2004 *Navy News* reported the story of a senior rate who was aiming to make a photographic record of every official war grave in Hampshire.

WO Steve Rogers was seeking help to ensure the graves were included in a national memorial project, the initiative being a spin-off from Steve's research into family history and subsequent visit to a Belgian military cemetery.

Almost seven years on and the subject matter is the same – but Steve has set himself a more ambitious target.

He and his widespread 'team' is nine-tenths of the way towards recording all 1.75 million-plus graves under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), including memorials to those whose bodies were never found.

The War Graves Photographic Project (TWGPP) initially sought to go back as far as World War 1, but the burgeoning popularity of the site has now led to all military personnel in whatever campaign being covered.

The task has been carried out by fewer than 900 volunteers, who have visited more than 23,000 cemeteries in 150 countries, including the graves of the former foes of the Allies.

The ultimate aim of the project is an online database of all graves, so that families or researchers can search for and locate any such grave anywhere in the world.

For more details on the project, and how you can help, see www.twgpp.org



● *Cdre Tim Lowe presents S/Lt Luke Perret with the Tigerfish Trophy*

Trophy double for Luke

AN outstanding performance during his Initial Warfare Officers course in 2009 saw S/Lt Luke Perret return to HMS Collingwood to pick up two prizes.

In a ceremony watched by his parents and sister, the first prize – the Tigerfish Trophy, traditionally awarded to the top student of the year – was presented to him by Cdre Tim Lowe on behalf of BAE Underwater Systems.

Paul Adderley, the Managing Director of Carl Zeiss Ltd, then awarded Luke a set of binoculars for achieving the highest marks in the navigation element of his course for 2009.

The awards made by these companies date back to 2005 and 1990 respectively.

Luke's citation for these awards read: "Luke arrived on IWO course fully prepared and ready for the challenge of the Navigational Watch Certificate assessment, which was reflected in an outstanding set of examination results.

"Consistently well above the standard expected, he proved himself not only as a safe and competent Officer of the Watch but also charismatic and dynamic."

On completing his IWO course Luke joined the Vanguard-class Trident submarine HMS Victorious.

Luke said of receiving his awards: "It's a great honour to receive these prizes, to have my family here too is extra special."

Poetry amidst the patrols

A NAVY medic who started writing to pass the time between patrols in Northern Ireland has been prompted to put some of his work in the public eye.

MA Gordon Bruce joined the Navy in 2008, but spent four years in the Army from 1998-2002.

"It was during my first tour in Northern Ireland when I was based at Forkhill that I started to do writing to pass the time between patrols," said Gordon.

He started with a short story, which grew into a novel (which has to date got no further than his computer screen), and he started writing poetry in 2000.

Now, as an MA at HMS Nelson, he has also added screenplays to his repertoire.

"People say they can relate to most of my poems, whether it's love, children, war, day-to-day life or personal feelings," he said.

"I don't regard my poems as anything special, but if people find comfort in them then I am pleased I have been able to help – they are just something I do to pass the time."

Friends of Gordon, however, felt his poetry deserved a wider audience – and you can judge for yourself on the *Navy News* website www.navynews.co.uk, where three of Gordon's poems can be found.

Reservist commands Cunard's latest liner

CHRIS Wells might be a Reservist, but he has charge of a ship which dwarfs everything else in the Naval Service.

For Lt Cdr Wells RNR is the Master of the latest Cunard luxury liner, the Queen Elizabeth – over 90,000 tons of pure indulgence and therefore about as far away from a pusser' grey war canoe as it is possible to get.

But Lt Cdr Wells, whose ship was named by the Queen in Southampton in October, has a role which manages to straddle opulent cruise ships and war machines packed full of commandoes.

"I am a List 1 Amphibious Warfare Officer," said Lt Cdr Wells, who was due to retire from the Reserves at the age of 55 as *Navy News* went to press – though he is looking forward to a further ten years serving in "these magnificent passenger liners" before he retires for good.

"My primary role would be to act as Senior Naval Officer on a ship taken up from trade – STUFT – providing advice to the Master of same with regard to tasking, protection and so on while operating with an amphibious task group.

"In practice, I could be assigned as SNO on a passenger or Ro-Ro vessel, or remain in command of my own passenger vessel if this was STUFT.

"In recent years, very few ships have been requisitioned or chartered for operations or exercises, and this has resulted in very few opportunities to exercise the SNO role.

"However, in the meantime, there has been a significant increase in capability within the RN and RFA for amphibious operations, with the introduction of Albion, Bulwark, and the four Bay-class RFAs.

"The AW RNR officers have been allocated the role of Amphibious Primary Watchkeepers within the Ship To Operational Manoeuvre cell within these ships, and my most recent training opportunities have been to act in this capacity on two of the Bay-class ships."

Despite the obvious differences between merchant and warship, there is plenty of common ground, according to Lt Cdr Wells.

"The SNO role provides an opportunity to bring RN training and experience to my normal role as Master of a merchant ship, either my own, or in an advisory capacity to the Master of a STUFT ship," he said.

"Both roles involve the movement of cargo or personnel, either ship to ship, or ship to shore or vice versa, and are therefore entirely complementary.

"The Navy provides excellent training in a number of areas, particularly organisational, which are not routinely covered in Merchant Navy training, and in damage control, which adds to the skills set.

"My experience within the Merchant Navy provides knowledge of the problems associated with moving large numbers of people in a short period of time, the difficulties in accounting for people and materiel.

"A 'boat port' operation on a large passenger ship requires the movement of up to 3,000 passengers ashore, using ship's boats, in as short a time as possible, together with their recovery back on board at the end of the day.

"Sound familiar?"

Lt Cdr Wells is the only Reserve officer serving in command with Cunard, now owned by the Carnival Group, and he welcomed the Queen on board his new ship in Southampton in October for the liner's naming ceremony.

As the liner prepared for its maiden voyage to Portugal and the Canary Islands the Blue Ensign fluttered in a stiff breeze on Southampton Water – the Master of the Queen Elizabeth is entitled by warrant of his Naval Reserve Queen's Commission to fly the prestigious ensign.

"The ensign definitely does add value and kudos – we strive to maintain the traditions and level of style and quality demanded by the Senior Service on board," he said.

"We had the Loyal Toast following the ship naming ceremony dinner, and undoubtedly there are many parallels in both style and maritime tradition."



● *Lt Cdr Chris Wells RNR, Master of the new Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth, with the Queen on the day of the ship's naming ceremony*

Picture: Cunard

Lt Cdr Wells, as Capt Wells, has charge of a ship more than four times the size of anything in the Royal Navy fleet – but he is already thinking of the opportunities presented when the Senior Service's new leviathan first goes to sea.

"Size isn't everything!" he said.

"Of course, I am extremely proud to have been given command of this brand new Cunard liner, to have brought her into service, to have had the opportunity to escort Her Majesty around the ship, and to lead a dedicated multinational ship's company.

"One of the biggest differences between the RN and the Merchant Service is that the merchant ships employ seafarers from around the world, and Queen Elizabeth currently has 55 nationalities represented in her ship's company.

"Meanwhile the Royal Navy is building two aircraft carriers to play catch-up in the size stakes, and we are particularly looking forward to the first delivery, our namesake HMS Queen Elizabeth – it is hoped that these two ships will develop a special and close relationship, embodying the close links between the Royal and Merchant Fleets."

Lt Cdr Wells' commitment to both services is admirable – his Reservist duties have been carried out in his leave periods – but from now on he will be able to devote his time to the second-largest Cunarder ever built, which will conduct programmes ranging from transatlantic crossings to world cruises.

Fun in fearnoughts



Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright

FIREFIGHTING might not be your idea of fun and games – but these youngsters look like they are having a good time.

Children from Carn Thomas Secondary School in the Isles of Scilly tested their firefighting skills when they visited assault ship HMS Albion.

Thanks to an initiative by the Naval Regional Commander for Western England Cdre Jamie Miller, the ship hove to off the islands and the children hopped into a landing craft for the transit.

And once on board the pupils were given a brief tour, and even got to sit in the Captain's chair.

They took part in a mock firefighting and damage control exercise, and at the end of their day at sea, they organised a Trafalgar-themed dinner party for members of the ship's company.



● *CPO Andy Vanes*

Totting up hours in Stringbag

THE iconic Fairey Swordfish aircraft of the Royal Navy Historic Flight (RNHF) has been out and about in the latter part of 2010 – and a newcomer to the team has been delighted at the chance to put some hours in his logbook.

The RNHF was established at Yeovilton in 1972 to preserve Naval aviation heritage, and as a living memorial to all Fleet Air Arm personnel.

The first aircraft to join the collection was Swordfish II LS326, presented to the RN in 1960 by Westlands at Yeovil.

The 'Stringbag' was a torpedo bomber which proved potent despite its lack of speed.

And with 2010 marking the 70th anniversary of the raid on Taranto, the Swordfish was an obvious choice for flying duties.

Taranto, staged on Armistice Day in 1940, saw the outdated Swordfish attack Italian warships in harbour, damaging several ships and denting Axis morale.

The RNHF Swordfish finished its brief 2010 flying season by conducting a flypast at Lee-on-the-Solent in honour of the Telegraphist Air Gunners (TAGs) – the TAGs memorial is situated on the seafront at Lee.

And taking a keen interest in her schedule was CPO(ACMN) Andy Vanes, of the RNR Air Branch, who works with the Commando Helicopter Force at Yeovilton.

Andy has clocked up over 8,000 flying hours in Wasp, Wessex and Sea King helicopters and Jetstream T3 planes, among others.

Now on full time reserve service with 848 NAS, he is passing on his skills to the next generation.

Last year he was invited by the CO of the RNHF to act as crew in the Stringbag during the display season – and the answer was very swift and in the affirmative.

Sodexo stars

SODEXO, the catering and leisure services contractor at RNAS Culdrose, has rewarded the achievements of employees at the base.

Certificates to mark Level 2 NVQ and Emergency First Aid qualifications were presented.

And star of the event was the Sodexo Unit and Regional Employee of the Month, Wai Man-Chan from Hong Kong.

Mr Wai, of Helston, has lived in the UK for nine years, working at Culdrose for the last eight of those.



Preserving Dartmoor

THE cadets of Cornwall Division at BRNC got an early taste of Dartmoor, long before the assessed leadership training session, when they spent a day working in support of the Dartmoor Preservation Association (DPA).

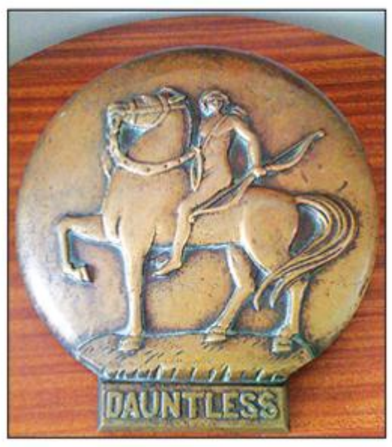
The session was programmed in as their assigned outreach project.

After navigating their way through some fairly thick fog the officer cadets worked alongside the regular volunteers of the DPA clearing scrub from Leedon Hill, a site with significant Bronze Age archaeology *(see above)*.

Fiona Senior, of the DPA, said "We are extremely grateful for the efforts of the cadets.

"Their sense of humour and teamwork ensured we achieved a lot in a fairly short time."

Veterans return for Inchon re-enactment



Dauntless badge set to return

A SHIP'S badge from a Great War-vintage light cruiser is to be presented to her modern-day namesake by RNA Headquarters.

The existence of the badge *(pictured above)*, believed to be cast in phosphor bronze, came to the ears of former General Secretary S/M Paddy McClurg through a contact in Fernham, Dorset.

Thinking it may have been the tampion from a gun, the object was retrieved from her wall – and it turned out to be a metal plaque from the Danae-class ship which was commissioned just weeks after Armistice.

The badge was brought back to Portsmouth and, accompanied by a photograph of the ship's company in New York Harbour in 1922 (believed to be just after British sailors rescued 14 of their American counterparts after an accident), was due to be handed to the Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless over the summer.

But for various reasons the formal presentation could not be fitted in, so HQ staff hope that a new date can be arranged early this year.

MEMBERS of **British Korean Veterans Association** travelled to the Far East to help mark the 60th anniversary of the Inchon Landings.

The group of 18 were responding to an invitation from the ROK Korean Veterans Association to attend the ceremonies – the success of the landings is regarded as being crucial in preventing the spread of communism to the south of the Korean peninsula.

WO Ian Smith of the British Embassy in Seoul met the group at the airport, and with a number of civilians helped chaperone them through a busy programme of visits.

The RN contingent consisted of S/Ms Joe Guy (who served in HMS Ocean during the conflict), Denis Philips and Fred Darwent; Ron Smith and Geoff King represented the Royal Marines, while the remainder of the party were from various Army formations.

First on the agenda was a visit to the National Cemetery where a wreath was laid, followed by a tour of the National War Memorial displays.

That evening they attended a reception given by the British Ambassador.

An early start was required the following day to catch a bullet train to Pusan for a pilgrimage to the UN cemetery where the British dead are buried or their names remembered on plaques.

"The UN Commonwealth Cemetery is beautifully kept and is a credit to the way the South Koreans look after those that went to their aid and became casualties of 'the forgotten war'," said S/M Joe.

"We held a suitable service and laid wreaths; three members had brought wreaths from the UK to lay on the graves of lost comrades.

"I was able to take a very good picture of the names of those RN and RM with 'no known graves'.

"I believe that all those lost on my ship, HMS Ocean, during the war are recorded save for Lt Cdr Machem, who I presume has a grave amongst the 2,000 British killed that are on this site."



● *S/M Joe Guy presents Capt Joo of the Republic of Korea Navy with a ship's badge from HMS Ocean*

The next day was supposed to be a quiet one; not so, as the party was roused early and told "no medals or military insignia, bring passports"...

They boarded coaches and were driven to the 38th Parallel, to look at various conflict sites along the demilitarized zone between the two Korean states.

Another early start, this time to avoid heavy traffic, heralded a day of celebrations at Wolmido, Incheon, site of the surprise landings in the Korean War.

On a hot day, with seats in a prime position, the veterans listened to speeches by various dignitaries and politicians, including the President of South Korea, Lee Myung-bak.

A re-enactment followed, featuring loud explosions to represent the preliminary bombardment by American and British ships, including light cruisers HMS Kenya and HMS Jamaica.

There was then an impressive buffet, provided by Republic of Korea Navy chefs, after which S/M Joe had the opportunity to make a presentation.

Capt Keith Blount, Commanding Officer of HMS Ocean, had been made aware of S/M Joe's forthcoming visit to Korea and asked his WO1 Philip Gibson to bring a plaque back to the UK from the Auriga deployment.

That plaque was taken to the Far East by S/M Joe, who presented it to Capt Joo, who had organised the event.

The two Royals, S/M Joe and an Army comrade then joined the head of a mile-long military parade through the street of Incheon, standing in a Jeep ("Fantastic!" according to Joe).

The remainder returned to their hotel in Seoul before a final evening of opera and another banquet.

That represented the end of the formal visit, and the party returned to the UK having thanked all the officials and embassy staff who had helped make the trip such a memorable week.



● *Lt Steve Cole, from HMS Raleigh (left) with S/M Dave Eaton, Chairman of the Fisgard Association*

Memorial created for Fisgard

A MEMORIAL stone has been unveiled on the site of a former Royal Navy base near Torpoint to remember all those who trained at HMS Fisgard.

More than 100 members of the Fisgard Association gathered for a service of dedication at the marble stone, located in the Trevol Business Park, close to HMS Raleigh.

The service was conducted by RN chaplain the Rev Mark Dalton, and shipmates were joined by officers from Raleigh and other dignitaries, including the Mayor of Torpoint, Cllr Eddie Andrews.

Fisgard opened in 1939 as one of two RN bases used to provide training for apprentice marine and weapon engineers, shipwrights and engineers for the Fleet Air Arm.

These apprentices, known as artificers or tiffies, continued to train at Fisgard until the establishment closed in 1983.

Artificer new entry training transferred to Raleigh while the technical aspect of the course was carried out at other RN training establishments.

In 2006 artificers were replaced by engineering technicians (ETs) specialising in weapon, mechanical and air engineering.

The new memorial was paid for by the association, which also obtained a 99-year lease on four square metres of soil.

Association chairman S/M David Eaton, who trained at Fisgard in the 1950s, said: "As an association we wanted to remember all those who passed through the gates of HMS Fisgard.

"We hope very much that this memorial will remain here undisturbed for many generations to come to remind people of the Royal Navy artificer apprentice."

Cairn pays tribute to Sturdy rescuers

A CEREMONY has taken place on a remote corner of the island of Tiree in Scotland which saw the completion of a cairn and plaque to pay tribute to the men of **HMS Sturdy** and the islanders who rescued and looked after her ship's company in difficult and dangerous circumstances.

The old destroyer ran aground on the Inner Hebridean island in a fierce storm in the small hours of October 30 1940, breaking up on Sandaigh Beach.

Five sailors died, and are buried in the Soreby graveyard, Balemartine, but the presence of mind of Capt Donald Sinclair, a Merchant Navy man, prevented much greater loss of life – he signalled the surviving sailors and told them not to abandon ship until daybreak, when the tide would have gone back.

Lt Cdr Gibson had contacted *Navy News* in the hope of finding relatives of the casualties (and raising the profile of the campaign), and one woman, the daughter of CPO Springett – who survived the wreck – saw the letter and travelled back to the UK from Australia to attend.

Dawn Springett laid a wreath on behalf of survivors, Cdre Charles Stevenson, of Rosyth, laid one for the Royal Navy and Lt Cdr Gibson laid one in memory of Capt Sinclair, who died shortly after the Sturdy incident when his convoy was attacked.

Some 80 people attended the ceremony, overlooking the beach; the service was led by the Rev Peter Williams and the Rev Bruce Neill.



● *A dozen veterans were invited along to Fratton Park to watch Portsmouth play a Championship fixture against Doncaster Rovers. Louise Purcell, Poppy Appeal organiser for the city, was contacted by the club, which offered VIP treatment for the 12 veterans, of all ages and from all three Services. One was Louise's husband, who was serving in HMS Sheffield during the Falklands and was also in the first Gulf war. He, like the rest of the veterans, was introduced to the crowd on the pitch just before the minute's silence for Remembrance, and had a thoroughly enjoyable day – though the Pompey fans amongst them will not have been too pleased by the 3-2 defeat*

Cheshunt members rewarded

CHESHUNT branch held their annual dinner at the Halsley Masonic Hall, with Cllr Charlie Traham as guest of honour.

During the evening S/M Marian Joy, the widow of the former branch chairman, presented the Ron Joy Memorial Cup to treasurer S/M Norman Dicker, while PRO S/M James 'Spud' Murphy was awarded Life Membership by chairman S/M Vic Everest.

Branch member S/M Ernie Havis had earlier been chosen for the Mercury Newspaper Civic Award for lifelong achievement.

Ernie has devoted himself to the youth of Broxbourne, not least through his presidency of the local Sea Cadet unit TS Intrepid.

Though critically ill, Ernie has fought a long, successful battle to establish a site for their new HQ.

He is a well-known poppy collector, and has been a driving force behind a plan to erect a memorial to the crew of a fully-laden US bomber which managed to avoid the town of Waltham Cross but crashed and exploded.

Ernie had attended the scene as the youngest member of the fire brigade.



● *Pictured above are the three remaining members of* **Wishaw** *who were left with the sad task of decommissioning the branch. S/Ms Tommy Leggate, Alex Thomas (branch chairman) and Alex Dickson (branch vice chairman) had to call it a day after 27 years as the branch had ceased to exist as a functioning unit. At a small service held at TS Enterprise, the local Sea Cadet unit in Airdrie, the trio handed over their standard to the youngsters for safekeeping, with the hope that the branch can be rejuvenated in the near future. In attendance were members of the RNA from Glasgow and the Scottish Area, who were entertained by the cadets' demonstrations of leadership, knot-tying, drill and other such activities – a good night, though coloured with sadness at the loss of the branch*

York remembers

YORK branch members joined the RBL and United Services at the city's Railway Memorial for a remembrance service.

That same afternoon, members of the family of the late Royal Marine David Hart, of Poppleton, accompanied by his former troop sergeant and members of 40 Commando RM, attended a tree-planting in David's honour.

Branch PRO Bernard Hallas said there was a degree of consolation in the fact that David was so well thought of by all who came into contact with him.



Murdered sailors honoured in Berlin

AT THE end of the Street of Nations, flanked by trees and villas, in the Berlin suburb of Oranienburg lies a slab of rock and a memorial inscription.

Here are honoured 17 Servicemen – seven of them Royal Navy sailors – murdered by the Nazis nearly seven decades ago.

The Street of Nations leads to one of the most infamous sites in Europe: Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where more than 30,000 people were killed between 1936 and 1945.

Near the gateway to the former camp – which still bears the chilling inscription *Arbeit macht frei* – is the Special Services monument, honouring commandos and saboteurs who died here.

And there on Remembrance Day 2010, veterans, members of the Royal British Legion's Berlin branch, and military personnel from the British Embassy in Berlin, among them CPO(Logs(Pers)) Jon Craig, paid their respects.

Most of the names on the memorial stone hail from two commando raids in Norway – seven soldiers from Operation Musketoon in 1942, seven Naval commandos from Operation Checkmate in 1943.

The men captured in the Musketoon raid against a hydroelectric power station were the first victims of Hitler's infamous 'commando order' which demanded – in contradiction of the laws of war – that Allied raiders taken prisoner should be shot.

By the time Operation Checkmate was launched the following spring, the six sailors and one soldier who volunteered for the mission were well aware of the dangers.



● *CPO Jon Craig (left) at the Special Forces memorial at Sachsenhausen, freshly adorned with wreaths*

Picture: Tom Smith, Chairman RBL Berlin

Using a fishing boat as a floating base, the men sought to strike at German shipping around Stavanger in canoes.

They found few targets, the fishing vessel's engine failed and they were caught by German troops.

The commandos were quickly handed over to the Security Service and, by the autumn of 1943, were at Sachsenhausen.

What followed was not death. It was worse.

As punishment for Allied air raids on Berlin, the men were sentenced to punishment with the 'shoe testing' detail: marching 48km (30 miles) every day on a special track which replicated various surfaces to test the effectiveness of new boots.

The Checkmate men did this for 420 days – they stopped only in February 1945 when, for reasons unknown, the SS guards became spooked and finally decided to execute the commandos.

Two of the sailors escaped punishment (one was in hospital, the other being hidden by Dutch prisoners), but five were marched with several hundred other inmates to Sachsenhausen's execution site.

What happened next is confused. Some of the prisoners revolted.

Checkmate's leader, S/Lt John Godwin – who remained the mainstay of morale and told his compatriots: "They have taken everything from us but not our spirit. God save the King!" – seized a guard's rifle and killed him.

Other prisoners took over a nearby building and fought off the SS until morning.

As for the two Checkmate survivors, they were smuggled on a transport to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

OS Keith Mayor was discovered hiding among Dutch prisoners and was shot; PO Alfred Roe died from typhus. Within days, the camp was liberated by the British.

Of the 29 Britons believed to have been executed at Sachsenhausen, the last Senior Serviceman to die – also honoured on the memorial stone – was Lt Cdr Claude Cumberledge RNVR, left behind in Greece in 1941 to conduct sabotage.

Sixty-five years after the guns fell silent, the strains of *Flowers of the Forest* were carried across the vast Sachsenhausen memorial site as the Rev Max Homewood of the RBL led a service of commemoration.

Being reminded of the sacrifices made by the early commandos was, says CPO Craig, a poignant occasion.

"Their bravery and sheer determination to survive against the odds made the British contingent a truly remarkable national group."

Service held for Truculent

THE **Medway Towns Submariners Association** will hold the 61st anniversary memorial service for HMS Truculent on Saturday January 15 at the St George's Centre, Chatham.

The service will begin at 10.45am and all members, families and friends should be seated by 10.30; the Mayor will arrive at 10.40.

The service will be conducted by the association's padre the Rev David Preston, and on completion a buffet lunch will be provided by the Medway branch while everyone has the opportunity to meet ex-submariners, survivors and friends.

Anyone interested in attending the service should contact S/M Archie Watt at 17, Larkin Close, Frindsbury, Strood, Kent ME2 4SA, tel 01634 710715, or email archie.watt@connectfree.co.uk

Cashing in for Alliance

MEMBERS of the **Portsmouth** branch of the **Submariners Association** who attended the memorial service on the Embankment in London in November also put in some serious fund-raising.

After the ceremonies were over, two shipmates carried out a bucket collection on the Embankment and on board HMS President for the HMS Alliance Appeal.

When the coins and notes were counted it came to £449.90 – so branch secretary S/M Ernie Williams, one of the collectors, flipped in another 10p to bring the total up to a nice round £450.

Less than two weeks later the vice chairman of the branch, S/M John Baber, took a cheque to the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport and presented it to George Malcolmson, on behalf of museum director Bob Mealings.

That brings to total the branch has raised so far to around £2,000 – and John Baber and fellow branch members have expressed their gratitude to all who have given up hard-earned cash for this cause.

In motion

MOTIONS and amendments for debate at the 2011 Annual Conference should reach the General Secretary by February 11.

The correct form can be found in the Branch Circular.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery submarine in our November edition *(right)* was HMS Auriga, which was also the name of the Royal Navy's major deployment to the United States last year.

The winner of our £50 prize was Mr K Ryall, of Nyons in France.

This month we feature a Ton-class ship *(pictured above)* which in the early 1960s blazed a trail in mine warfare circles by undergoing conversion to become the Royal Navy's first operational minehunter, using highly-accurate British-built sonar kit.

What was her name?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH.



Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is February 11 2011. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our March edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 191

Name

Address

.....

.....

My answer



● *S/M Janet Gould*

Janet bids farewell to Cyprus

CYPRUS branch's long-serving and stalwart secretary Janet Gould was due to leave at around the time *Navy News* went to press.

S/M Janet was presented with a gift of a silver dish and cut glass goblets accompanied by flowers as an appreciation of all her efforts over the years and in the company of her late husband Vice Chairman Ian.

Janet and Ian were among the original members of the Cyprus branch, and members were reminded just how much time and effort the Goulds have given to branch gatherings.

Janet has not only performed secretarial duties but also organised the branch's stand at the Episkopi Fete for many years – and produced the lovely sandwiches at branch meetings.

Shipmates wished her all good fortune in returning to her family in England.

Taking leave of Ark Royal

SHIPMATES from **Wetherby** branch were the last veterans group to bid farewell to HMS Ark Royal in North Shields as the carrier made a brief farewell tour of UK (and the odd German) ports before she decommissioned.

Ten Wetherby shipmates were shown the two remaining Harrier jets on board, which were due to fly off the following day.

They then climbed to the bridge and Air Command centre, and were given a good look at the Merlin anti-submarine helicopter.

Branch chairman S/M Fred Wake said: "It was a very enjoyable visit made at a very emotional time for the ship's company.

"They gave us some insight as to their feelings and concerns.

"We departed as the paying-off pennant arrived – reportedly over 200m long."

Guernsey raises funds for heroes

CASH raised at the HMS Charybdis and Limbourne memorial weekend has helped boost the coffers of Help for Heroes.

On the first Sunday in October Capt Peter Voute, President of the **Guernsey Association of Royal Navy and Royal Marines**, told an audience at the ever-popular band concert performed by the Royal Marines Band Collingwood that some of the money raised would go to the charity.

The £500 cheque was duly handed over to the charity at a Help for Heroes dinner at Les Rocquettes Hotel in the latter part of November.

More coffee?

BOURNE branch raised £265 at their first coffee morning, which included home-made cakes, scones, a tombola, raffle and a lucky strike.

The cash raised for branch funds will be distributed to local charities that serve the people of Bourne.

And the event was so successful that shipmates are planning more in the future.



Seven help twelve at the eleventh hour

SEVEN members of **Plymouth** branch were delighted to step in at the 11th hour to host 12 veterans of the Irish Naval Association on a walk around some of Plymouth's tourist spots, including the Naval War Memorial on the Hoe *(pictured above)* and the Barbican.

Liaison for the visit Rob Mulrooney indicated by email that the visitors would arrive 24 hours before they actually appeared, which caught everyone on the hop, but it soon became apparent that the visitors were no strangers to the ancient naval custom of enjoying the odd beer, despite the late hour.

The Plymouth shipmates were informed, in a soft Irish brogue, that the Irish Navy was the only Navy that were allowed to get on a bike and go home for lunch...

The visitors unanimously declared the trip a success and issued a general invitation for a return visit to Limerick in the near future – an offer that is being given some serious and careful consideration.

Wheelchair for Jonty, pronto

BOTH **Pershore and District** and **Sheldon** branch were involved in fund-raising to buy a powered wheelchair for a local four-year-old disabled boy.

Jonty Smith has cerebral palsy, left hemiplegia and epilepsy, and has just started primary school in Pershore with a full-time carer.

He needed the £9,000 wheelchair to give him a certain degree of independence and allow him to keep up with his friends, rather than rely on an adult pushing him.

Fortunately, Pershore branch's secretary S/M Trudy Burge was on hand to help, and used her contacts to turn this into a high-profile fundraising campaign.

She ran a charity quiz night with Jonty's mother Jane, obtained raffle prizes, ran tombolas and organised a grand coffee morning at the end of October – where they announced that they had reached their target.

Much of the hard work was done with the support of Trudy's family and her parents, Ted and Margaret Annis, who run both the branch and their Social Club.

At the branch annual Trafalgar Dinner, S/M Terry Brimmell had the honour of presenting Jane with a cheque for £500 from the club, and Sheldon branch chipped in with a £100 donation.



Speaking at the fund-raising finale, S/M Brimmell paid tribute to Trudy's hard work, and said how proud they were of her for raising such a sum of money in just six weeks.

And Jonty has become part of the Pershore scene, commandeering his own cap bearing the tally HMS Victory, as seen above with his mum Jane, RNA members from both branches, and the Mayor and Mayoress of Pershore.

Be realistic and know what you're asking

WELCOME to Drafty's Corner sponsored by the Naval Personnel Team (Warfare) (or NPT(X) for short).



Drafty's corner

Based in West Battery, Whale Island, NPT(X) primarily provides career management (CM) for all Warfare Branch Senior Rates, and for some Junior Rates.

The recently-renamed Career Management Cells (CMCs) in each of the Base Ports manage the vast majority of Warfare Junior Rates.

In addition, NPT(X) provides the strategic Warfare Branch requirement management aspects.

The main challenges currently facing NPT(X) Ratings Career Management are:

■ *Manning balance*

The RN is now close to 100 per cent manned and as a result, this limits our ability to offer ECs, extensions of service (EOS) and FTRS, as these would increase our overall numbers.

Notwithstanding the SDSR announcements, the promotion and EC boards cycle, however, will continue as normal.

■ *Augmentation*

There is no uplift in numbers (liability) to provide people to fill Optours. This means that each fill will result in a gap elsewhere.

We try to spread this impact, but as we rely heavily on volunteers, we cannot always control where the gaps will fall.

It should be noted that the Optour requirement is always changing, and we endeavour to keep all personnel informed of such changes, which are invariably at short notice.

If you are interested in an Optour, please contact your CM.

■ *Operational Pinchpoints (OPPs)*

There are a number of OPPs within NPT(X), especially within the SEA spec, LACs and LS/PO WS(AWW) and (UW).

Each OPP group is examined closely and will have several measures in place to resolve or at least ease the situation; invariably these need time to take effect.

Members of OPPs (by main trade/rate groups) are always encouraged to apply for extensions of service if they are eligible.

■ *Promotion Candidates.*

A number of OPPs result from a shortfall in candidate numbers at promotion boards.

In some cases this is due to the lack of the necessary competences as outlined in BR3 (formerly BR1066), with RNFT being the main culprit.

It is essential that individuals take ownership of their JPA records, and check that they have the correct competences awarded to coincide with their Common Reporting Date.

OPS checks have also been a common failing, but an announcement of changes to OPS checks is expected shortly, so watch this space.

General points – you can help yourself to help us:

■ *JPA*

Make sure that JPA reflects your true and realistic preferences.

CMs make their assignment decisions in order to meet the needs of the Service and balanced against the professional and personal aspirations of the individual, as contained in JPA.

If JPA does not reflect your current preferences, then you may have to live with the consequences.

CMs can date track back, so changing your preferences once an AO has been raised does not work!

Your preferences should also reflect reality – if the majority of your eligible (Spec/Rate) posts are in Portsmouth, then an area to avoid of 'Portsmouth' is likely to result in disappointment.

■ *SJAR.*

The Comments box on the SJAR creates a permanent record and is viewed by the promotion board.

Comments to your 1RO such as "thanks mate a good report but could you change promotion prospects from High to Excp" are not beneficial – neither is providing a re-write of your RO's comments.

■ *Assignment cycle.*

Be aware of your likely sea/shore rotation – it should not come as a surprise if your SAV date is due and you get assigned back to sea.

The default value is 36 months sea/18 months shore, but this will vary by main trade and rate.

If in doubt, check with your CM and manage you and your family's expectations accordingly.

Your Future Availability Date (FAD, formerly ERD) will, where possible, best reflect your CM's target date, but it is advisory only, and circumstances do change.

Successful promotion candidates should expect to go straight to sea on completion of the necessary courses in your new rate.

Remember to check that you receive the necessary Sea Service competence when due.

THIS article necessarily highlights the problem areas, yet for the majority it is business as usual.

Whilst the SDSR announcement has already happened, it will take some time for the options and impacts to be fully assessed and completed.

Timely information will be released via the appropriate internal IC channels.

In the meantime, keep your JPA up to date and maximise your career development and promotion opportunities.

Have your say in Two-Six

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

The *2-6 TV* DVD has been aligned with the Personnel Support Brief providing an enhanced package for use in sharing information.

Feedback received regarding the new-look *2-6 TV* DVD is encouraging. Your thoughts and opinions are invaluable.

Please forward any constructive ideas about what should be covered to WO1 Baz Cooke or Pauline Aquilina.

To feature in the *Navy News* 2-6 pages contact Lt Cdr Heather Lane or WO1 Cooke.

■ Lt Cdr Heather Lane, 93832 8809, FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC SO2

■ WO1 Barrie Cooke, 93832 8821, FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC WO

■ Pauline Aquilina, 9621 85984

Don't let debt get on top of you

THE NFF diary shows that the pace and appetite to hear about issues and concerns from Royal Naval and Royal Marines families is showing no signs of slowing down, *writes Jane Williams of the Naval Families Federation*.

These meetings need either solid feedback on any issue that is presenting itself as a challenge for families or comment on just how well aspirations are delivering.

To get in touch and tell us what is or isn't working for you please call: 02392 654374, e-mail: admin@nff.org.uk or write to us at: NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Ave, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

What's in the diary for the next few weeks?

■ External Reference Group, which influences and informs on the Armed Forces Covenant.

■ The Central Advisory Committee on Pensions and Compensation

■ MP for Portsmouth, Penny Mordaunt, who is visiting the NFF.

■ Families Forum which meets directly with the Minister for Defence, Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan and Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel and Training), Lt Gen Sir William Rollo.

If you have any comment or issues, then please just get in touch.

The announcements concerning the review on Allowances for all Armed Forces personnel will be available at www.nff.org.uk – all the details are in the 'Money' section, just follow the links from the front page.

■ *Debt Overload:*

Credit Action give options and information to help.

No one chooses to suffer the pain of unmanageable debt. We are bombarded on all sides by advertising that tells us what the good life looks like and credit that offers us a way to have it all now.

The festive season causes even more pressure to splash out. In December 2009 an estimated four million people had gone into debt to pay for Christmas and three million were still paying for Christmas 2008.

The way to avoid becoming part of the statistics is to set a budget and stick to it! Prepare for next Christmas by taking action now.

For some, the worries are bigger than Christmas, so when do you need to take action?

What are the symptoms of a debt problem? If any of the following apply to you, then you have a debt problem that needs addressing.

■ your payments are being returned unpaid, you are regularly late in paying your bills or only ever make the minimum repayment;

■ you have to use your credit card for day-to-day purchases or make cash withdrawals on a credit card;

■ you borrow money to pay off existing debts or repeatedly reschedule your debts;

■ you are struggling to pay your priority bills – mortgage, rent, council tax or gas/ electricity;

■ you are regularly stressed about money or kept awake at night worrying about how to pay your bills.

What can I do?

There is nearly always a solution to a debt problem. It may require some tough decisions and some hard work, but it can be done.

By their very nature, debts are urgent; they compound rapidly over time, and can spiral into deeper trouble.

Work through the following steps and you'll be making a good start on the road to financial recovery.

1. Don't ignore your debts.

2. Be honest with yourself, your partner and any older children.

3. List your debts and draw up a realistic budget. Prepare a statement of your financial position, detailing your income and expenditure.

You need to take time over this and be realistic about all the things you spend money on.

A budget sheet can be downloaded free from www.creditaction.org.uk

4. Prioritise your debts – prioritise paying those bills for which non-payment will result in loss of home, liberty or essential goods and services.

5. Check your benefits and tax code – details can be found on the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) site www.adviceguide.org.uk. There is a useful calculator at www.turn2us.org.uk.

6. Maximise your ability to repay – decide on your priority financial commitments, cut down on non-essential spending. Debt is a symptom not the problem.

Before tackling debt you must reduce your spending, not only to stop you borrowing more, but to maximise repayments.

8. Get help if you need it – if after doing your budget and reviewing your expenditure you feel you can realistically sort out your own debts then download a copy of Credit Action's self-help booklet from the website detailed above.

If you are not confident or overwhelmed by the problem, seek help to approach your creditors and organise your repayments.

There are several sources of *free*, independent help:

■ Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS), freephone 0800 138 1111, Mon – Fri 0800-2000

■ CCCS Debt Remedy – an anonymous online service found at www.cccs.co.uk

■ National Debtline Freephone 0808 808 4000, Mon – Fri 0900-2100, Sat 0930-1300. Also online at www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

■ You can contact your local CAB – their website (see above) has a postcode search for your nearest branch

■ www.moneyadvicemap.com will allow you to search for other providers that offer face-to-face help in your area.

You may see advertising in the media or even receive marketing telephone calls from companies offering to assist with your debts.

The vast majority of these companies charge for their services. Even if the initial advice is free there will be a cost to any action they take on your behalf.

All the organisations listed above give their services free of charge.

This is one of those rare situations in life where you don't actually get a better service by paying for it and it means that all your money goes to repaying your debts as fast as possible.

Some of the adverts are based around a debt solution called an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA).

They are the right way forward for some people, but they do always have associated costs.

The suggested sources of help will refer you on to a reputable Insolvency Practitioner if it is agreed as the right move for you.

Help is out there should you need it…

■ *Changes to PAX Insurance Scheme*

As a direct result of the announcements in the recent budget (2010/11) there will be a one per cent price increase to the PAX insurance scheme prices, taking effect from January 2011.

For the full details go to www.nff.org.uk and follow the links.

■ *Cold weather*

Defence Estates (DE) and Modern Housing Solutions (MHS) give cold weather advice:

– What can I do to prevent damage to my heating and plumbing system during cold weather?

You can prepare for cold weather by locating the position of the water main stopcock in your Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and checking that it operates in case you need it.

You should also report to your prime contracting helpdesk any taps and cisterns that require attention and also any damage to insulation on outside pipe work.

During severe weather you are responsible for ensuring that the temperature in your SFA does not fall below 10°C. Keep doors of rooms without heating open to allow heat to circulate.

In severe weather conditions, you could also slightly open your loft hatch to allow some warm air into the loft pipes.

– What about outdoor pipes?

You need to take special care with pipes leading outside the house.

For outside taps you should shut off any isolating stopcock when not in use, and leave taps open.

If you are unsure about what to do, please contact your maintenance contract helpdesk.

– What precautions should I take if I am going away in cold or severe weather?

You are responsible for ensuring that adequate frost damage precautions are taken, as you could be liable for damage if it occurs. You should therefore:

■ Leave your central heating on permanently with the room thermostat set to a minimum of 10°C

■ Turn all radiator valves on to full, leave all internal doors open and slightly open your loft hatch if appropriate

■ Where possible, leave your keys with a trusted neighbour and ask them to check the house regularly.

Your experiences form the basis of our discussions.

To get in touch with NFF, telephone: 02392 654374, e-mail: admin@nff.org.uk, or write to us at:

NFF, Castaway House,
311 Twyford Road,
Portsmouth,
PO2 8RN.

Making Stoker history

IN NOVEMBER a team from the Royal Naval School of Marine Engineering at HMS Sultan visited the headquarters of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) at Birdcage Walk in London to witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Royal Navy and the IMechE.

The document, signed by the RN's senior serving Marine Engineer, Vice Admiral Andrew Mathews (Chief of Materiel Fleet) and the IMechE's Chief Executive, Stephen Tetlow, draws the two organisations closer through shared goals to increase the numbers of Registered Engineers in the ME branch by accrediting their training and providing a Special Authorised Process to registration.

Witnessed by Rear Admiral Bob Love (Director Ships) the signing of the MoU marked the culmination of 18 months work between HMS Sultan and the IMechE to examine the academic training and engineering experience gained by Marine Engineering branch officers and ratings throughout their careers, and to map it against the Engineering Council's requirements for Professional Registration at Engineering Technician (EngTech), Incorporated Engineer (IEng) and Chartered Engineer (CEng) levels.

This agreement now enables RN Marine Engineers to become Members of the IMechE and register at the appropriate level through a significantly reduced application process, taking full account of the individual's Service experience and qualifications.

Lt Cdr Danny Owens (HMS Sultan's Training Officer (Marine Engineering)) who worked with the IMechE to produce this MoU said: "With the signing of this MoU, ME training and career development is now recognised by three Professional Engineering Institutions, offering Marine Engineers greatly simplified routes to Professional Registration through the Institution of their choice, be it with IMechE, the Institute of Marine Engineering Science and Technology (IMarEST) or the Society of Operations Engineers (SOE)."

The MoU also contains a simplified route for senior Royal Navy Marine Engineer Officers to become Fellows of the Institution.

Pioneered by Cdr Richard Tarr (HMS Sultan's Commander (Marine Engineering)) the MoU recognises the senior engineering management experience and expertise required in order to be promoted to this level and allows all ME Officers of Commander's rank and above to upgrade from Member to Fellow, on application.

Visiting IMechE headquarters for the first time were seven members of Marine Engineering Submariners' Systems Engineering and Management Course who were given a presentation on the benefits of Professional Registration before being treated to a guided tour of the building, accompanied by a history of the Institution whose early members included George and Robert Stephenson, Napier and Brunel.

The highlight was very much the library, combining centuries of historic documents with the latest in modern data storage and retrieval systems.

Attendees from HMS Sultan were: Cdr Richard Tarr (Cdr ME), Lt Cdr Danny Owens (TOME), Mr Paul Smith (STGME8), S/Lts Bowler, Davy, Hughes, Kinsella, Renshaw, Savery and Twinn (SEMC(MESM)10).

Dedicated Royal Navy pages are now live on the IMechE website at: http://www.imeche.org/membership/apply/specialised-approved-routes/RN

Any Marine Engineer wishing to know more about Professional Registration and membership of a Professional Engineering Institution should first read 2010 DIN01-133.

Getting the message out

We've come a long way since coloured flags, burning beacons, flashing lights, Morse code and semaphore; – the introduction of e-mail delivered via the internet and intranet has transformed the way we communicate in the Royal Navy (some would say not necessarily for the better in these days of mass information and in-box overload...), writes Lt Cdr Heather Lane of *NCHQ Internal Communications*.

Everyone would agree that the best way to get the latest information is from a trusted colleague or leader – delivered face-to-face and in instantly understandable, plain English.

Naval leaders go some way to achieving this ideal solution through both the long established Chain of Command Briefings or Divisional Officer meetings system but an additional face-to-face resource is also provided by the 'Personnel Matters' – Divisional Briefing roadshow updates delivered with dynamic energy and gusto by NCHQ's WO(IC) Barrie Cooke as he travels the UK visiting establishments, ships and formed units, anywhere that RN personnel are serving in this country.

WO Cooke's up-to-date, relevant presentation provides information changes and direct guidance in an entertaining, short accessible brief and he delivers a constantly updated handout on 'Where to Look' for further information.

The NCHQ Internal Comms desk officer recently attended a class presentation by the Leadership and Management School Leadership Course defining the provision of internal communications in the RN.

The petty officers conducted a survey across a range of Navy personnel and as a result of their findings made some useful recommendations to NCHQ.

We are always keen to receive feedback – one of their findings was to explain the internal communications delivery process and to continue raising awareness of all the channels and products used.

One of the key recommendations was to raise awareness of the useful one-stop-shop RN Internal Comms hub, a link to which can be easily found on the RN Intranet site in the left-hand column under RN information (*and is pictured above*).



To a number of the POs on the course this site was clearly a light-bulb moment when they came across the easily accessible internal comms and library resource online.

So it seems it now needs to be shared more widely with serving personnel with access to a DII(F) terminal.

Don't worry, those at sea without DII(F), because the content of the website is regularly captured and sent to the ships for upload to their servers to provide library resource.

Other means of communicating key messages and management information to the Fleet are Galaxy Messages.

These pan-Navy announcements originate within departments in Navy Command and on the Navy Central staff or they are adapted from tri-Service Defence Internal Briefings (DIBs) produced by the MOD.

They provide a Royal Navy interpretation of the impact of announcements on Naval Service personnel.

Some of you may not be aware of Galaxy messages or have seen one. Sometimes they are re-interpreted by your Command staff and line managers or placed on Daily Orders.

Sometimes they are posted to team websites and occasionally they are deleted unread – yes, we do know when they have been deleted unread. COs, EWOs, BWOs and Coxns be aware...

It is in your interest and the interest of your people to brief and display Galaxy messages prominently in your establishment and ensure they are read and understood.

Defence Instructions and Notices (DINs) are defence-wide instructions, guidance and notices. They were introduced in March 2005, and incorporated all the existing categories of Defence Council Instructions (DCIs), MOD Personnel Instructions (PIs), Finance Instructions (FIs), and some other defence-wide systems for writing, disseminating and reading internal instructions, guidance and notices.

Ignore them at your peril as they contain a myriad of important announcements that will directly affect you at some time in your career.

The most pertinent ones are drawn to your attention in the Where to Look column in Two-Six and in the Personnel Support Brief booklet provided inside the Two-Six DVD case, a useful aide-memoire for Divisional Officers meetings.

RNTMs provide 'temporary' announcements to keep a regular flow of short-life information notifying events around the Fleet.

Always consider when you are drafting a RNTM whether it is more suitable for a more permanent DIN or Galaxy message or whether indeed the information it contains needs to be more permanently incorporated in a BR or JSP.

Internal comms to Navy Families is enhanced by a number of channels – not least the superb service provided by RNCom and the Navy Internet team and more recently the Naval Families Federation's excellent website and magazine *Home Port*.

The NFF are looking at ways we can deliver this independent magazine to more people outside the main port areas but it is also available in an online version which undoubtedly saves the trees.

The RN has also ventured boldly into the world of Facebook, Twitter and online blogging. Social or new media, as it's known, carries with it a whole world of communications risks and these are identified clearly in the MOD's Online Engagement Guidelines which are well worth reading (available both on the internet and intranet).

However it would be unwise not to harness the power of getting the 'unclassified' message across in these widely-used mediums, especially to audiences who have grown up with these information formats.

And then of course we have our own long-established *Navy News* and *Globe and Laurel* – eagerly anticipated and often read from cover to cover by Service personnel and considered a vital source of trusted and entertaining information to its readers.

We use *Navy News*' Two-Six pages to communicate important matters while the vibrant, breezy presentation of Two-Six DVD spotlights news featuring Navy personnel helping to explain in a visually compelling and entertaining fashion the breadth of activity taking place within our diverse community.

Two-Six DVD is distributed across the Fleet to BWOs and EWOs for further informing and updating our activities and change initiatives.

The RN IC hub is updated throughout the day with all the latest information – a rolling up-to-the-minute info source that we here in the print version of *Navy News* are unable to match.

As the January *Navy News* goes to press, the upcoming allowances announcement – which will be of interest to all serving personnel – is expected to take place, but will not happen in time to be reported in this issue.

For the latest authoritative information on announcements – including changes post-SDSR – please keep an eye on the RN IC hub section on the RN intranet.

A life beneath the waves for women

THERE has been some media attention lately on women serving on Royal Navy submarines for the first time.

There is an ongoing review of the Navy's policy of excluding women from serving in submarines, and this study is considering the operational, health, legal, social, technical and financial implications.

Despite recent media reports, no decisions have yet been taken, but all options will be considered.

One newspaper claimed that "only mine clearance diving teams and the Royal Marines would remain all-male".

Hopefully readers of December's *Navy News* saw the article on Lt Catherine Ker who is the RN's first female diving officer since the policy changed.

This change came about after a review by the Institute of Naval Medicine (INM) which came to the conclusion that women were at no greater risk of suffering from decompression sickness than men.

The INM has also undertaken medical research into the risk to female reproductive and foetal health from contaminants in a submarine's atmosphere.

Are your qualifications up to date?

IT IS important that leading hands and corporals are aware that from April 1 2012, NAMET will cease to be a valid educational standard for promotion to PO/Sgt.

Personnel will need to achieve Basic Skills level 2 certificates in Adult Literacy and Numeracy, or attain an alternative recognised qualification such as GCSE Grade C or above in Maths and English, in order to be considered eligible for promotion.

Those who already possess GCSE Maths and English at Grade C or above will remain educationally qualified for promotion.

Advice on Basic Skills can be obtained from Education Officers, Unit Education Officers, Naval Education Training Service Officers and the network of RN/RM Learning Centres.

Please telephone the following in the first instance:

- HMS Nelson – 9380 26712 (023 92 726712)
- HMS Drake– 9375 67885 (01752 567885)
- Clyde Naval Base – 93255 5971 (01436 675971)

If you already hold Basic Skills level 2 certificates in Adult Literacy and Numeracy or an alternative recognised qualification, please ensure they are recorded in your personal competence profile on JPA.

Further details are contained in 2010 DIN07-024.

Personnel Matters updates

Presentations to Naval Service personnel on the latest personnel matters briefings are now carried out by WO Barrie Cooke.

To book an Internal Comms presentation in 2011, delivered face-to-face by the Naval Command's representative for Internal Comms briefing, please contact FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC WO or FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC SO2 (*see It's your 2-6 on page 31*).

Wiltshire academicals

WILTSHIRE College in Salisbury celebrated the graduation of 12 of its Royal Naval students in Salisbury Cathedral in November *(pictured right)*.

"It has been another very successful year for the Royal Navy students studying with Wiltshire College Salisbury," said WO1 Dean Rogers, Professional Programmes Tutor.

"Thirty-two students are now eligible to graduate, having completed their level 5 and 7 degree and postgraduate level qualifications in this academic year."

Twelve attended the graduation ceremony, along with VIP guest Cdre Campbell Christie, while the remainder were unable to be present due to overseas commitments or deployment duties.

In addition, there are a further 42 RN students who are undertaking CMI Management NVQ and diploma studies with the Salisbury campus of the college.



WO1 Rogers said: "This is positive proof of the Service commitment to the provision of 'Through Life' learning and Command, Leadership and Management training – both by formal promotion courses giving CMI Management qualifications from the WOs, DOs, SRCC and LRCC promotion courses – and by encouraging and recognising individuals Continuous Personal Development.

"These middle, graduate and postgraduate level management qualifications recognise and enhance the management and leadership skills gained within the service and competence now possessed – both in service at junior, middle and senior managements levels – and for those nearing the end of their service.

"These skills and qualifications become the springboard for future employment outside the service, which can be looked forward to with confidence in the knowledge that these are highly recognised and sought after in the civilian employment market."

Wiltshire College was formed in 2000 and is now, following the merger with Salisbury College in January 2008, the main provider of further and higher education in Wiltshire, with an excellent reputation for quality provision, innovation and student care.

With over 3,300 full-time students and 6,000 part-time students, Wiltshire College has four main campuses and four smaller centres throughout the county.

where to look

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS

91/10: Future Reserves 2020 Study (FR20) In announcing the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) on October 19 2010, the Prime Minister commissioned a six month review of the Reserve Forces. It will be known as the Future Reserves 2020 Study (FR20).

89/10: Changes to PAX Insurance Scheme effective from January 4 2011: As part of the Budget in June 2010 the Chancellor announced a one per cent increase in Insurance Premium Tax from January 4 2011. As a result there will be a one per cent price increase to the PAX insurance scheme prices. This will take effect from January 4 2011 and will be reflected in PAX premiums for January onwards.

87/10: UK-France Defence Co-operation Treaty: At the annual UK-France Bilateral Summit the Prime Minister and President Sarkozy announced a new programme of Defence Co-operation.

83/10: Foreign Secretary issues first quarterly report on Afghanistan: Foreign Secretary William Hague delivered the first of the Government's quarterly reports to Parliament on Afghanistan on 27 October, in which he said steady progress is being made although serious risks and challenges remain.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES (DINS)

DIN 2010 DIN01-187: Regular Armed Forces Redundancy Programme

DIN 2010 DIN01-188: Redundancy Provisions for the Regular Armed Forces

DIN 2010 DIN01-194: Equality Act 2010 – Disability Discrimination

DIN 2010 DIN01-201: Volunteers for United Kingdom Special Forces Group (UKSF)

DIN 2010 DIN01-205: Volunteers for service with 148 (Meiktila) Commando Forward Observation Battery Royal Artillery

DIN 2010 DIN01-206: Naval Service - Merger of regional OJAR cells with Officers' Promotion Section (OPS) at Portsmouth

DIN 2010 DIN01-209: Status of Sports in the Services – This DIN supersedes DIN 2007 DIN01-105

DIN 2010 DIN01-216: Battle Injured Mental Health Monitoring Pathway – A pilot study (BIMHMP)

DIN 2010 DIN01-219: Armed Forces Childcare Voucher Scheme – This DIN supersedes DIN 2009 DIN01-121

DIN 2010 DIN01-221: Change to PAX Scheme effective from January 4 2011

DIN 2010 DIN01-224: Permanent Transfer Overseas – school allowances

DIN 2010 DIN02-023: Initial action to be taken by non-police personnel on discovering an incident involving death or serious injury – This DIN supersedes DIN 2005 DIN02-243

DIN 2010 DIN05-068: Complaints handling in the Ministry of Defence – This DIN supersedes DIN 2008 DIN05-001

DIN 2010 DIN07-170: Joining Instructions for personnel attending Maritime Warfare School courses at Phoenix Training Group – This DIN supersedes DIN 2009 DIN07-161

GALAXY MESSAGES

Galaxy 27-2010: Women in Ground Close Combat Roles The MOD Review concludes that the current policy on females serving in Ground Combat roles will remain unchanged. For the Naval Service, this means that women will continue to be excluded from the Royal Marines General Service.

Galaxy 26-2010: Message to Navy Command civilian staff: Personal from 1SL

Galaxy 25-2010: Personal from 1SL: 70th anniversary Battle of Taranto.

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA

Issue 13/10 RNTM 242/10: RN Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Extraction (SERE) training policy

Issue 13/10 RNTM 254/10: BRd9468 (FLAGO(SM)) ART 1403 Firefighting Training

Issue 13/10 RNTM 255/10: Warnings for ratings on the Untrained Strength (UTS)

Issue 13/10 RNTM 256/10: Driver Training course for Royal Navy personnel – April 2011 to March 2012

Issue 14/10 RNTM 264/10: Procedure for reporting of fires and floods in ships, submarines and RFAs

Issue 14/10 RNTM 267/10: Discharge Shore (discharge unsuitable during training) and transfer of ratings on the Untrained Strength

NOTICEBOARD



Chatham pauses to remember the men of the Royal Oak

COMMANDER Simon Huntington casts a wreath into now calm waters at Britain's greatest natural anchorage (*left*).

Beneath the spot where his frigate HMS Chatham is paused rests the wreck of HMS Royal Oak.

The battleship was torpedoed by U-boat ace Günther Prien, who slipped through the defences of Scapa Flow in the Orkneys.

Prien's actions in October 1939 saw him fêted by the Nazi propaganda machine – and condemned 833 British sailors, many of them boys, to a watery grave; Royal Oak sank in just 13 minutes.

Over that spot 71 years later, the Type 22 frigate took a break from specialist navigator training around the Scottish coast to honour the men of Royal Oak.

A service of remembrance was held on the ship's flight deck, where operations officer Lt Jamie Leeper described the battleship's bitter fate for his ship's company and a bugler sounded the Last Post ahead of a minute's silence.



Pictures: WO1 R J Hunt, HMS Chatham

It fell to Chatham's CO to lay a wreath – a wreath (*pictured above*) crafted on board from a bough of oak which had been presented to the ship by the Men of Kent and Kentish Men when she visited her namesake town in November.

"Anchored in the calm of Scapa Flow today, it's impossible to imagine the horrors of that night when HMS Royal Oak was lost so quickly," said Cdr Huntington.

"It was a truly moving occasion. It was entirely fitting that we should take the time to honour those who have served before us and paid the ultimate price."

RECRUITMENT

PRODUCTION ENGINEER

Bluemay Limited is a family-owned plastics engineering business based near Melksham, Wiltshire with a permanent vacancy for a time-served, experienced and dedicated individual, of engineering artificer calibre or equivalent, who will be involved "hands on" as well as with some supervisory work. All necessary specialist training will be given. Hours are 8am to 5pm, Mon-Fri (no shift work) with five weeks annual holiday over and above public holidays. Salary will be according to experience; there is no pension scheme.

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www.bluemay.co.uk

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To apply please go to www.avcgroup.co.uk/careers.php

The closing date for applications is Anglia and Central areas 30/04/2011 and Yorkshire and Scotland 30/06/2011

1971 1981 1991 2001 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...

● *Ta-ta to HMS Tartar*



January 1971

THE minesweeper HMS Wolverton (appropriately perhaps) was celebrating a seasonal nativity in the seamen's messdeck.

The proud mother was a black mongrel bitch who had wandered on board whilst the ship was in Great Yarmouth.

When Wolverton sailed for Scotland the stray had to be sent on shore and handed over to local police in case she was claimed, but when no owner came forward, the soft-hearted sailors clubbed together for her rail fare and OEM1 Jim Woodcock was sent to collect her.

Christened 'Sniff,' she soon settled into shipboard life, but it wasn't long before her shape changed and she apparently assumed 'a smug expression'.

When her five pups were born, it didn't need much detective work to indicate who was the daddy because of their similarity to Scampi, the coxswain's dog from HMS Bildeston, which had been lying alongside Wolverton in refit.

All the pups were spoken for by members of both ships' companies.

January 1981

A PROUD tradition came to an end when HMS Tartar, the last of the Tribal-class ships, paid off, and with her the Tribal Lantern.

The Tribal Lantern was a lamp *(not a bulb? – Ed)* first acquired by HMS Ashanti in 1962. It was a prize trophy among the seven Tribal-class frigates and was traditionally presented by the holding POs' mess to that of another Tribal-class when two were in port together.

It was the receiving mess's honour to provide ale for the donating mess while the candle in the lantern was alight.

The lantern was presented to the curator of the Royal Navy Museum in Portsmouth, where it is on display to this day in the 20th-Century gallery.

January 1991

ANOTHER step towards full integration of the WRNS took place when women officers adopted RN rank titles.

The title change followed the decision in 1990 to send women to sea for the first time. The changes meant that Superintendent became Captain, Chief Officer became Commander, First Officer became Lieutenant-Commander, Second Officer Lieutenant, and Third Officer, Sub-Lieutenant.

The distinctive blue rank markings however were retained, although it was planned that the women would switch to gold braid in due course.

HMS Invincible was the second warship to take a complement of women, as 76 joined her to work in a wide range of duties, including aircraft maintenance, communications, secretarial, medical, stores and accounting.

January 2001

BIRTHDAY celebrations were beginning for the Submarine Service, which was making plans to mark its centenary throughout the coming year.

It was announced that Sir John Mills, then 94, was to be made an honorary member of the ship's company of HMS Tireless to acknowledge his contribution to wartime submarine films (*Above Us the Waves* and *We Dive at Dawn*) and his support of the boat during her extended stay in Gibraltar.

Navy News published the first of four supplements about the history of the Silent Service, entitled *No Occupation for a Gentleman?*

NOTICEBOARD

Trophy lives



TROPHY No **7241** is a silver model of a Scimitar fighter aircraft and was presented to the aircraft carrier HMS Victorious by Vickers Armstrong to commemorate the first embarkation of a squadron of these aircraft in that ship in 1958.

HMS Victorious had, at that time, completed an extensive modernisation which included fitting the ship with steam – rather than hydraulic – catapults, the mirror landing aid and an angled flight deck.

In her original form, Victorious had, in January 1945, been part of Admiral Vian's Force 63; this force included the carriers Indomitable, Illustrious and Indefatigable, the battleship King George V, three cruisers and ten destroyers.

The ships were en route to Sydney, Australia, where they eventually became part of the British Pacific Fleet and then supported the Allied invasion of Okinawa.

On their journey across the Indian Ocean they refuelled before preparing to attack Japanese-held oil refineries at Palembang in Sumatra.

The raid was scheduled to take place on January 21 but was delayed for three days by bad weather.

The carriers launched a total of 43 Avenger bombers, 12 Firefly fighter-bombers and a total of 50 Hellcat, Corsair and Seafire fighters.

Although the refineries were protected by barrage balloons the attack was successful; unfortunately a total of 32 aircraft were lost to either enemy action or crash landings on return to the carriers.

This raid was codenamed Operation Meridian One; Meridian Two took place on January 29 when a raid was carried out on the Japanese oil refineries at Soengi Gerong, also in Sumatra.

This attack was also successful, the Japanese losing 30 aircraft in combat with a further 38 being destroyed on the ground, while 16 British aircraft were lost.

The enemy attempted a counter-attack, but this was beaten off by a combination of fighter cover and anti-aircraft fire.

Assignments

Cdre William John Keegan to Fleet CMR as Commander Maritime Reserves from March 8 2011.

Cdr Patrick G Dowsett to HMS Northumberland as CO from March 8 2011.

Rear Adm Peter Hudson to be Chief of Staff Capability from February 2 2011.

Rear Adm George Michael Zambellas to be promoted Vice Admiral and become Deputy CinC from January 18 2011.

Cdre John M L Kingwell to become Commander Amphibious Task Group from January 12 2011.

Cdre Paul Bennett to become Director Naval Personnel Strategy from February 1 2011.

Cdre John K Moores to 1 Submarine Squadron as Commodore Faslane Flotilla from March 8 2011.

Cdre Duncan L Potts to be promoted Rear Admiral and to be Commander United Kingdom Maritime Forces from January 26 2011.

Cdre Simon P Williams to BRNC Dartmouth as Commodore from February 22 2011.

Cdr Louis M Wilson-Chalon to 815 Naval Air Squadron as CO from December 15 2010.

Reunions

HMS Auriga S69: About 20 of the last commission of HMS Auriga still get together once a year in the home town of one of the crew, such as Southampton, Swansea, Rotherham, Chester, Ipswich, Clacton-on-sea, Chatham and Cambridge, to name a few over the past eight years. In 2011 we will meet up in Cleethorpes, nr Grimsby. Any ex-Auriga submariners wanting more details should contact Les Parfit, 3 Lynton Close, Harwich, Essex, CO12 4BN or tel: 01255 240425.

MARCH 2011

HMS Diana Association: Hold their next reunion and AGM at the Park House Hotel, Blackpool from March 4 to 6. Our association is made up from shipmates from all commissions, so if there is anyone out there who is an ex HMS Diana matelot, and would like to come along and join us and hopefully meet up with your old oppos, please ring the hotel 01253 620081 and book a room. For further details please contact J Fisher at johnjackie.fisher@talktalk.net or tel: 0116 367 8360.

HMS Sirius F40. Calling all Dogstars. The next reunion (Engage!) will take place in HMS Nelson WOs' & SRs' Mess on March 5. Details will grow on the website http://www.hmssirius.info. As always, success depends on *you* spreading the word. Silly questions to Pam at mws-wtg-pwouww3@fleetfost.mod.uk or andyayres@blackberry.orange.co.uk or tel: 01329 333525.

The Junglie Dinner takes place on March 24 at the Wardroom, HMS Heron. For more details contact Lt Helen Baker at chf-jungliedinner@mod.uk or tel: 01935 455374.

HMS Resolution Association hold their 2nd reunion from March 25 to 27. This will be a special reunion where we will be dedicating a bench at the National Arboretum and unfurling our Association Standard for the first time. The reunion will be attended by some of our former Captains. For more information contact Dave Goodman at goodmand@ie.ibm.com or tel: 00 353 1 8152436.

APRIL 2011

HMS Decoy Association: The 24th annual reunion takes place from April 15 to 17 at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Southport. New members of all commissions welcome. Come and claim your 'tot'. For details contact Malcolm 'Dobbo' Dobson at dobbo.exrn@btinternet.com or tel: 01502 677395.

HMS Cumberland Association: 2011 annual reunion at The Langham Hotel, Eastbourne, from April 15 to 17. For details contact Sam Watson, chairman at sjwba11003@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01634 235861.

HMS Dunkirk Association: Reunion at the Ramada Encore Hotel, Chatham on April 16. Contact Jackie Carroll at jande.carroll@talktalk.net or tel: 01692 678721.

HMS Tenby Association will be holding its 18th annual reunion at the Arlington Hotel, Bournemouth, from April 29 to May 2, all members are most welcome. For more information and a booking form contact Ken Jones at krhysjones@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01752 406326.

MAY 2011

Exeter 82 Association: A reunion is planned for May 28 at the WO & Chiefs mess at HMS Excellent from 1930hrs. The invite is open to all ex Exeter crew members now. Contact Reg Cornall at reginald.cornall@btinternet.com or tel: 07875 268584.

JUNE 2011

NP 1042/OP Lecturer: Did you serve in Cambodia 1991-92 as part of NP 1042/OP Lecturer? Want to meet up with oppos and spin dits? RV likely to be in the south-west summer of 2011, all those interested please e-mail Tony Jacka at Anthony.jacka219@mod.uk or tel: 07919 292819.

SEPTEMBER 2011

S58 Class Artificer Apprentices: Calling all members of S58 Class. To commemorate the 45th anniversary of our joining the Royal Navy in September 1966, a reunion is to be held on September 17 in Portsmouth. Those interested please contact Colin Stokes at colinstokes@btinternet.com or tel: 01489 581432.

CT/Special Communications Unit (SCU): By kind permission of the RSM and committee it is intended that CT/SCU reunion will be held in the WO & Sgt's Mess, Ayios Nikolaos, Cyprus on the evening of September 22, 2011. Final details and price to be agreed in the spring. The evening will include an informal buffet; wives and partners will be welcome. Own accommodation to be arranged individually by attendees. Anyone desiring to attend please contact Eddie Clamp at edward.clamp@btinternet.com or tel: 01243 605832 or write 10 Grove Rd, Selsey, Sussex, PO20 0AS. With grateful thanks to our local organisers: WO1 CT Clint Eastwood and S/M Eric Hurst.

OCTOBER 2011

Royal Naval Writers' Association (RNWA): The World's Oldest Military Association. The 124th RNWA Reunion Dinner takes place at WOs, SRs and SNCOs Mess, HMS Drake on October 14. Return transportation from Portsmouth available and accommodation in Plymouth or attend just for the reunion dinner. Serving and ex-serving Writers and serving Logisticians (Personnel) and guests welcome. For further information, contact: RNWA Secretary Les Heyhoe at les@heyhoe.com or tel 07950 934888.

HMS Lowestoft – change of date: To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first commissioning a reunion has been arranged to take place at Chatham on October 28-29 2011. All who served in HMS Lowestoft during her 25 years in service (1961-86) are welcome to attend. For further details please contact Ian Mckenzie at ian.mackenzie480@virgin.net or the website http://www.sabie.co.uk/lowestoft/home.htm or tel: 01935 825672.

Ask Jack

7th Cruiser Squadron: I help to organise the East Kent branch of the Western Front Association. We have been contacted by a Dutch WFA member, Henk H M van der Linden, who has recently published a book in The Netherlands about the 7th Cruiser Squadron and the loss of three cruisers, Aboukir, Hogue and Cressy, to a German U-boat on September 22 1914. Henk recently visited the graves of some of the men in The Hague and found a wreath left by 'The 7th Cruiser Squadron Foundation'. He would like to get in touch with this group, but has failed to find out anything about them. If you are able to help contact Hazel Basford at hazel@basford.com or tel: 07768 872371.

Contacts

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info
RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearchpgrc@tnt.co.uk
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnrmc.org.uk
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Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
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National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Competition

The winners of *The Pacific* competition that appeared in our November 2010 issue. Five DVD box sets to:

Mr A D Stewart, Zeals, Wilts; B J Badger, Chippenham, Wilts; Philip R Jones, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks; Tel Cotter, Sittingbourne, Kent; A G Savage, HQ Helicopter Cmd, HQ Land Forces, Andover.

Winning answer: 'Operation Downfall'

Sports lottery

November 20: £5,000 – MEM1 A S Donnelly; £1,500 – A/LReg F G Barlow; £500 – Mne M L Ray.

November 27: £5,000 – CPO A D High; £1,500 – Cdr I B Clarke; £500 – OMW1 D L Coleman.

December 4: £5,000 – Mne L S Clarke; £1,500 – OMW1 C K Morris; £500 – CPOWEA D N Howe.

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in February's Noticeboard must be received by **January 11**

Deaths

Bob Fossey. LME on board Cheviot 1952 and a member of the association. November 16.

Leonard 'Len' Wiggins. Coder. Served 1943-46 in Redmill (survivor) and Singapore Wireless Station. Captain Class Association. November 10. Aged 85.

John A Grant RM. Flotilla Bosun. Served 1941-46. Chatham division. Swimming Instructor and represented the Royal Marines in water polo. November 5. Aged 86.

Anthony 'Tony' Frame. Leading Seaman. Served 1950-62 in Lynx, Venus, Cardigan Bay, Chivalrous and Daring. HMS Daring Association (1952-54). November 17. Aged 81.

Cyril James Thomas. Stoker Mechanic. Served on board Unicorn 1947-49. November 6. Aged 81.

Kenneth John Hibbard. CPO PTI. Served as AB RP on board Loch Fada 1955-56 (o/c qualified Clubswinger), also ships Indefatigable, Maidstone, Vigo, Daring, Whitby and Bulwark and establishments St Vincent, Vernon, Dryad, Collingwood, Mercury (twice), Terror, RNB(P), Fisguard and Harrier. Founder member of HMS Loch Fada Association. November 24. Aged 74.

Rupert Price. L/AM(O). Served 1941-46 joining Lee on Solent Port Division aged 17. Spent time in Africa and Australia. Fleet Air Arm Association. Active member and carried out the yearly accounts audit for the Birmingham branch. October 23. Aged 87.

E P Bufton. LST and Landing Craft Association. Served on board LCT 1102. September 28.

H F A Giddings. LST and Landing Craft Association. Served with LCA Flotilla 513 and on board LSI(H) Brigadier. November 30.

Arthur 'Bob' George Keable. PO Coxswain. Served 1946-55 in Ganges, Whirlwind, Corunna, Jutland, Dolphin, Maidstone, Forth and submarines Acheron, Turpin, Talent, Scorcher; also as an Instructor at Ganges. March 22. Aged 79.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Charles Brian Atkinson. Lt (SCC)RNR. Served RN 1945-48. Radar Gunner on board Sheffield. Involved with Basildon Sea Cadets in the late 1970s through the 1980s and gained his RYA Yachtmaster. Basildon branch RNA. November 1. Aged 82.

Eric Faunch, DSM and Purple Heart. Served 1939-48 at Ganges and in Tyne, Maori (sunk Malta Harbour 1942), Medway (sunk off Alexandria 1942), Engadine and Norfolk (1944-46 Far East). Medically discharged. Lichfield branch. November 5. Aged 87.

Winifred Irene Hartley. Associate member of Beccles branch. November 8. Aged 72.

Edwin Pratt. Able Seaman. Served 1941-46 in Javelin, Berwick and Trespasser. Member of SOCA and North Russia Club. Nuneaton RNA. November 4. Aged 88.

Derek Douglas Craig. RVM. Served as Leading Steward on board HMY Britannia 1973-94. Southern Ontario branch. November 27. Aged 57.

Ann Vera Rolph. WRNS. Served in Defiance. Dartford branch. Aged 88.

June Gillam. WRNS. Served in Hornet. Dartford branch. Aged 83.

Mick Coyle. Stoker. Served 1943-47 in Termagant (Far East and injured in action), Bulldog and Beagle; Russian Convoys and liberation of Channel Islands. Vice president No.8 Area, president and past chairman and welfare officer Stourbridge RNA also active member of SSAFA. November 12. Aged 85.

Bernard 'Bernie' George Battrick. Chief Shipwright Artificer 1st Class. Served 1945-69 in Victorious, Jamaica, Orion, Cumberland, Woodbridge Haven, Eastbourne, Wizard and Mull of Kintyre; also Drake, Lochinvar, Royal Arthur, Cochrane, Fisgard, and Ganges. Retired to Spain in 1986 and was an active member of the RNA. Founder member and past chairman of Moraira & District, Spain branch. November 17 in Denia, Spain. Aged 81.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

W 'Bill' Bennett. CPO TGM. Submarine service 1942-46 in H32 and Universal. Essex branch. Aged 96.

Cdre D 'David' Burns. Submarine service 1964-2000 in Astute, Andrew, Churchill and Spartan. Dolphin branch. Aged 66.

C J 'Charlie' Deleay. AB ST. Submarine service 1942-46 in Tantalus. Essex branch. Aged 88.

H 'Harry' Edwards. L/Sto. Submarine service 1941-46 in Seadog, H28, L26 and Oberon1. Dolphin branch. Aged 87.

R R 'Roy' Oram. PO (2nd Cox'n). Submarine service 1946-62 in Saga, Tiptoe, Tradewind, Spiteful, Thorough, Seascout, Scythian, Thule, Sentinel, Talent and Artemis. Poole & District branch. Aged 84.

P J 'Peter' Parry. AB HSD. Submarine service 1943-46 in H32, Unseen and Affray. Welsh branch. Aged 86.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

Bill Cock. Sto1. Served in Welfare. September 14. Aged 74.

Tom Keen. Sto1. Served in Fancy and Moon. October 14. Aged 83.

Les Harris. Sto1. Served in Pluto, Lysander and Mutine. October 23. Aged 78.

Richard 'Dick' Richardson. AB. Served in Albacore. Chairman. November 11. Aged 85.

Don Young. EM. Served in Chameleon. November 12. Aged 82.

James Brown. AB. Served in Coquette. November 17. Aged 84.

HMS BELFAST ASSOCIATION

David Gunstone. Served onboard as Chief GI 1959-61. May 27.

James Findlay. Served onboard as Mechanical E1 1961-62. July 31.

David Caldecot. Served as Lieutenant on board 1961-62. August 1.

Ronald Hall. Served as Master at Arms on board 1944-47. September 2.

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An unsolicited testimonial in Yachting and Boating World for my 390 page novel 'SOME DISTANT SHORE'.

'For something a little different, I've just started reading 'SOME DISTANT SHORE' by Reg Osborn. About a third of the way through and finding it hard to put down. Reg was in the RN in WWII in the RN's special forces. He was a member of the undercover 'LEVANT SCHOONER FLOTILLA' group which operated in the Aegean Sea on Turkish caiques, mostly using the smaller (30'-35') Tricanderi type. Really fascinating reading and quite 'real' and raunchy in places! I've been reading it with an Aegean chart open to follow through where everything is happening and finding it quite fascinating as I've sailed to most of the islands and harbours mentioned.'

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EDUCATION
The Best Start In Life

A Navy News Advertorial Feature



Live life to the full at Perrott Hill

"SCHOOLS now treat our children as though they are made of china," wrote the author Conn Iggulden earlier this autumn.

He raised concerns about teachers who worry about organising school trips for fear of litigation, about schools which avoid contact sports and even hesitate over traditional games such as conkers.

It goes without saying that all teachers and parents wish their children to be safe in their school environment, but we also have a duty to prepare them for future life where competition, risk and adventure are experienced on a regular basis.

Creating an environment where the perceived danger is great, but the actual danger is small, is a fine art and one that is still alive at Perrott Hill.

The school encourages the children to play in the woods, to play games on a daily basis, to enjoy snowball fights when the weather allows (staff vs pupils being a favourite) and Perrott Hill has a talented and dedicated staff who ensure that these activities can occur with controlled risks.

It is no coincidence that the children enjoy themselves, look forward to school and truly wish to learn.

The school invests time in teaching manners and the common courtesies which are so often overlooked in the rush of modern-day life.

Children spend time learning about eye contact, greetings and opening doors; and how important these skills will be as our children inherit the world in which we live.

Perrott Hill endeavours to give the children the opportunity to experience as many different activities as possible, for if we cannot do this when they are young, when do we find the time?

It strives to find something that each and every child can excel in; be it academic, sporting or artistic and when they achieve their goals the children feel good about themselves, they walk tall and, as a result, their performance improves in all aspects of school life.

All this is best summed up by the Registrar of a very well-known public school in a quote from the *2010 Good Schools Guide* review: "The Perrott Hill pupils who come to us have retained the wonder of childhood instead of parading themselves as young adults."

In the words of the *Good Schools Guide*, Perrott Hill "is a traditional prep school of the best sort."

Rob Morse, the Headmaster, warmly invites you to come and visit Perrott Hill and see for yourself what the school has to offer.

Perrott Hill Open Mornings: Friday and Saturday January 21 and 22. Perrott Hill Scholarship Day: Friday February 4.

For further information please call Susan Cleary on 01460 72051 or e-mail her at admissions@perrotthill.com.

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Dyslexia help at Appleford



APPLEFORD School was established in 1988 by two experts in the field: Gerald Trump who founded the first school for dyslexic children in the UK and Dr Peter Gardner, a highly-qualified and experienced psychologist and psychotherapist.

Appleford's aim is to provide a high-quality education for children aged seven to 14 with dyslexia and associated learning difficulties to include dyscalculia, dyspraxia, ASD and ADHD.

To this end the school only accepts children with an appropriate assessment from an Educational Psychologist and/or a statement of special educational needs.

The school is a co-educational day and boarding school, and warmly welcomes applications from children of families in the Services. The school is approved by the Children's Education Advisory Service.

Appleford encourages a broad and holistic concept of education and aims to provide small classes, individualised and differentiated teaching delivered by well-qualified and experienced teaching and learning support staff, a broad and balanced National Curriculum with an emphasis on literacy skills, a high level of pastoral support, experienced and caring Houseparents in homely and structured boarding houses designed to develop personal organisation and lifeskills, an extensive games and leisure activities programme and a strong professional support team.

The school has a Christian character and close links with its local church.

Nevertheless, Appleford welcomes applications from all kinds of families, regardless of disability, religion, race and ethnicity.

However, due to the specific educational needs of the pupils, the school can only accept children who have English as their first language.

Appleford wants its children to realise their full potential and to develop self-respect, self-reliance and self-discipline.

The school aspires to return children to mainstream education where possible.

It is Appleford's desire to help to lay the foundations for each and every child for a successful career and a happy, fulfilling life.

Children's Education Advisory Service

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EDUCATION

Engineering success at Welbeck

MANY Royal Navy Engineer Officers have started their careers with qualifications from Welbeck. Welbeck is one of the most successful sixth form colleges in the country, with 100 per cent pass rate at A-level for the past five years.

Welbeck concentrates on mathematics and science-based subjects, preparing students for science and engineering degrees leading to technical and engineering roles in the Armed Services and MOD Civil Service. The Royal Navy offers Welbeck students the opportunity to pursue a career as a Weapon, Marine or Air Engineer officer.

The state-of-the-art campus in Woodhouse near Loughborough has been designed to offer the kind of facilities that young adults would expect, including outstanding teaching and learning resources, high quality, modern halls of residence and superb all-weather sporting and recreational facilities.

As well as consistently being a top performer in the sixth form college league tables for its academic results, the college is equally proud of its reputation for the pastoral care and welfare of the students.

They leave Welbeck with high values and standards having experienced a two-year programme of academic excellence, Personal Development Training and a variety of sporting and extra-curricular activities.

Whatever activities students pursue, they'll find that they are able to quickly develop teamwork and leadership skills – vital to the career that they are working towards.

Once students have achieved success at Welbeck, they'll be offered a place at Newcastle, Southampton Solent, Southampton, Aston, Northumbria or Loughborough Universities.

For exceptional students, there is the opportunity to attend Oxford or Cambridge.

Education can be an expensive business these days. So it will come as a relief to know that Welbeck will support students, offering financial assistance during their time both at Welbeck and university. The latter comes in the form of an annual bursary, which currently stands at £4,000.

A move to Welbeck will give an invaluable blend of qualifications, skills and experience, and a direct route into a career within the Armed Services or Ministry of Defence Civil Service.



● *Chris Alcock, headmaster of Queen's College, raising money for 40 Commando*

A new view of Queen's

HEADMASTER Chris Alcock has suddenly got a whole new view of his school – from three miles up!

Mr Alcock and three Queen's College sixth-formers, Kate Alger-Green, Gemma Bagge, and Kate Phillips, took part in a charity sky-dive with the army's Red Devils parachute display team to raise money for 40 Commando's charitable funds.

They took off from Dunkeswell airfield and climbed to just over 15,000ft before leaping from the aircraft, each of them firmly attached to an instructor.

"We had about 45 seconds of free fall before the parachute opened," said Mr Alcock, who had never jumped before.

"The first few seconds were a bit disorientating with us tumbling over, but once we'd flattened out and begun to glide there were fantastic views across the Blackdowns and over Taunton.

"It was incredibly exhilarating and I'd do it again like a shot."

The four Queen's sky-divers will have raised almost £4,000 from friends and well-wishers sponsoring the jump.

The school presented the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund with a cheque when 40 Commando returned to Norton Camp.

Capt Jon White RM, a former Queen's pupil. was seriously injured by an IED explosion in Afghanistan during the summer months.

Admirable education at Kelly College

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy.

Kelly is situated in the beautiful south-west of England and offers a co-educational full and weekly boarding, and day education for pupils aged 11–18.

It is a school of 360 pupils of whom half are boarders. The Prep School shares many of the facilities of the senior school including boarding from Year 5.

Kelly provides a high-quality, well-balanced education with a strong commitment to a whole range of extracurricular activities.

The staff are fully involved seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Kelly enjoys an established reputation for excellent academic results (100 per cent pass rate at A-level, with 67 per cent at grades A*, A & B in 2010) and for its cultural and sporting achievements.

For further information about the college's bursaries for Service families or to arrange a visit, please contact the registrar, Candace Greensted, on 01822 813100, 01822 612050 (fax) or admissions@kellycollege.com.

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West Hill Park scores highly

A RECENT annual review of the Early Years provision at West Hill Park Pre-Prep by the Hampshire Early Education and Childcare department identified it as Outstanding, achieving one of the highest overall scores in the county.

They were particularly impressed by the stimulating learning environment which has been enhanced by a recently created woodland classroom.

Established in memory of a young pupil, the woodland classroom is based on the Forest school model, providing children with a safe, stimulating outdoor learning environment where they can develop their self-confidence and self-esteem.

At West Hill Park we believe it is a unique way to teach children key life skills including the ability to work as part of a team to solve hands on problems.

Children as young as three can be found sawing wood, building dens and cooking sausages on sticks around a campfire that they have built themselves, supported by trained and experienced staff. Even washing up can be fun outdoors!

The intention is that this woodland classroom will benefit not only our pupils but also the children in the local community.

A staff training day for teachers and support staff from a local Primary school and three local nurseries recently held in the West Hill Park woodland classroom will be followed up by children from these schools regularly spending time in it.

The value to the local community was recognised in the recent Hampshire review of the Early Years provision at West Hill Park School.

Mr Ramsay, Head of West Hill Park, said: "Through having fun together in this very special place we hope that children from our school and the local community take away with them wonderful memories, skills which will stand them in good stead in their future lives and a love and appreciation of the natural world around them."



Bear day at St John's

CHILDREN in the Infant and Junior departments of St John's College dressed in spotty socks and ties and brought their teddy bears to school to support Children In Need.

Paying £1 per item and the same for their very own Pudseys to attend lessons and assembly, the school raised over £150.

St John's pupils have already raised over £2,000 for worthy causes since the start of the new school year in September, including a very successful sponsored day of challenges for the Pakistan Floods Appeal.

Children also supported the Rotary Shoe Box Appeal and donated a large amount of food to the Salvation Army at their Harvest Festival.

The next open morning is Tuesday January 18 2011.

St John's College is an independent, co-educational day and boarding school for children aged two to 18 situated in the heart of Southsea.

Founded as a boys school in 1908, the college now attracts over 700 pupils and students to its nursery, lower and upper school and sixth form.

The college's ethos is inspired by the teachings of St John Baptist de la Salle, the patron saint of teachers. It provides an academic education within a Christian environment, but welcomes boys and girls of all faiths and beliefs.

High standards are set by the college through its programme of investing in pupils, staff and facilities.

An exciting variety of extra-curricular activities are on offer, along with academic and emotional support to ensure students feel secure and stable at the college.

If you would like to arrange a visit to the school please contact 023 9281 5118 or visit www.stjohnscollege.co.uk.



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Ofsted Outstanding 2007|2008

Year 7 Entrance Assessment: 15 January 2011. Open Morning: 18 January 2011, 9:30am - 11:00am.
Applications for entry to the Reception Year (4+) now being taken. Fees for families claiming the service boarding allowance are set so that for the current year parental contribution is only £1,935.

EDUCATION



Excitement at Chilton Cantelo

EXCITING new developments have continued to take place at Chilton Cantelo School and much more work has been done during the last few months with the support of parent company Cognita.

The school has installed five brand new classrooms and re-structured and refurbished the boarding facilities.

Once again, pupils from Chilton Cantelo School achieved outstanding results in 2010's GCSE examinations.

Feedback from the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) was extremely positive with the report highlighting the high level of academic achievement and the "excellent" personal development of pupils. As part of the on-going development plan for the school a sixth form is also proposed.

Starting at £2,550 the fees represent fantastic value for money and with increased extra-curricular opportunities and national success both individually and collectively over the last couple of years, it is an exciting time to be a pupil at Chilton.

Shebbear is best

SHEBBEAR College continues in its belief that it is the 'Best small school in the south-west' and is continuing to build on its already impressive infrastructure. Recent years have seen improvements right across the school.

Not only have all of the school's teaching areas been subject to considerable investment but the addition of a full size all-weather pitch as well as a professional standard cardiovascular suite; dance studio and weights room, have ensured that the sporting facilities are exceptional.

Work has started on the new build onto the existing Junior School with the addition of an assembly hall, and three new classrooms due to open in September 2011. The Kindergarten has been redeveloped and now boasts one of the best facilities in the south-west.

On the music front a new Recital Room will complement the already-successful choir and the music technology lab is benefiting from the addition of 22 new Apple Mac computers.

Contact Mrs Jacky Rowe on 01409 282001 or registrar@shebbearcollege.co.uk.

Overseas advice from CEAS

IF YOU are offered an overseas posting you will have to look carefully into the education available for your children.

The type and quality of education available will differ from country to country and often from one part of a country to another.

The opportunity for a child to be educated in a different system and a different culture can have tremendous advantages, but you will have to weigh up carefully the advantages and disadvantages.

Before you decide to take your child overseas you must contact CEAS who will advise you on the type of schools and funding available in that country and whether the educational provision is of a high enough standard.

Education overseas can be roughly divided into four different types as listed below.

■ *Service Children's Education (SCE)*

SCE provides schools in parts of Germany, Cyprus, Belize, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar and Brunei.

SCE schools follow the English education system as closely as possible, however, they cannot always provide the same level of support.

If your child has special educational needs, you must contact CEAS, before you accept an overseas posting, to check if your child's needs can be met.

Further information on SCE school locations and types can be found on their website: www.sceschools.com

■ *English Speaking Schools*

If you are posted to an English speaking country your child will be able to attend the local state school.

The school will follow the curriculum of the country and the English national curriculum will not be available.

If there is a more appropriate independent day school available locally you may be eligible for an allowance to help you with the cost of fees.

■ *Non English Speaking Schools*

If you are posted to a country where the local schools teach in a language other than English your child may be able to attend one of these schools.

There is an allowance to help your child learn the local language but the provision varies from country to country.

The English national curriculum will not be available.

Your child will need to have a real interest in languages if he/she is going to thrive in one of these schools.

■ *International Schools*

These are independent schools which can sometimes be found in non English-speaking countries.

These schools cater for the international community and the main language is usually English.

The curriculum sometimes follows the same pattern as in England but other systems may be followed.

If there is an International school close to where you are posted you may be able to claim an allowance to help with fees.

If you have any worries about any matter regarding the education of your children, please contact CEAS for information and advice: www.ceas.mod.uk, e-mail: enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk, and helpline: 01980 618244.

Truro celebrates its results

THE year 2010 has been an important year for Truro High School with the celebration of its 130th anniversary and a string of further successes.

A-level and GCSE results have again been outstanding. Fourteen per cent of A-levels were scored at the new A* grade with 65 per cent scoring A* to B and 83 per cent achieving A* to C. Nearly 75 per cent of the girls were accepted for their first choice of university.

Twenty-one per cent of all GCSE grades were A*, with 60 per cent at either A* or A, 87 per cent at A* to B and 97 per cent at A* to C.

Ninety-six per cent of students got at least A* to C in five subjects – including English and Maths.

Boasting first-class teachers, small class sizes and excellent facilities, Truro High's success can largely be attributed to providing an all-round education that is focused on developing the individual.

"We create an environment tailored to girls, one that encourages their desire to learn and which fosters an increasing confidence in their own judgement and risk taking," said Headmistress Caroline Pascoe.

"We have a very strong work ethic and a committed, dedicated staff who have the experience and expertise needed to bring out the very best in everyone."

In February, an Ofsted inspection report confirmed the outstanding level of boarding facilities at the school.

Boarders, it said, enjoy an "excellent system of pastoral care", "high quality, well appointed, safe and secure boarding accommodation" and "excellent sporting, study and recreational features".



The school also received an excellent write-up in the *Good Schools Guide* recently.

Truro High School Nursery is described as a "lovely, safe setting" where "switched on, specialist staff get young minds and limbs off to a happy start."

The Prep School is described as having a "nurturing atmosphere, caring and communicative staff who produce great results" and the Senior School is "a 'must visit' for those seeking an academically challenging yet emotionally nurturing environment for their daughters."

Other highlights have been the school's participation in the fiftieth Ten Tors event and a month-long expedition to the foothills of the Himalayas, led by Mrs Pascoe, which resulted in all twenty girls who went achieving their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards.

For more information about Truro High School, visit www.trurohigh.co.uk or call 01872 272830 to organise a taster day or tour.



Trinity's affinity

CAPT James Morley, Commanding Officer of HMS Albion, hosted a Field Day on November 26 for cadets of Trinity School Teignmouth Combined Cadet Force.

HMS Albion, the core of the Navy's amphibious assault force, has been Trinity School CCF's affiliated ship since being commissioned in 2003.

Thirty-five cadets in Year 9 who joined CCF in September, accompanied by Lt Gérard Poulet and S/Lt Philip Tadd of the RN Section and Capt Philip Jones, O/C of the Army Section and his 2 i/c Lt Eddie Campbell-Thomas arrived at Camels Head Gate, Devonport Naval Base, on a bright but bitterly cold morning to be met by Lt Edward Faulkner, and Lt Seanaidh Rae.

After a brief welcome from Capt Morley in the Command Planning Room, the cadets were divided into two groups and embarked on tours of the ship: one before and the second after lunch.

Cadets were very impressed with the sophisticated facilities in the Combined Operation Room and lingered on the bridge with the automated plotting table fed from GPS as well as the old chart and compass methods.

The second part of the visit took them to the flight deck, the weapon system and the dock below where it was easy to imagine LCUs (Landing Craft Utility) leaving manned by members of Albion's own Royal Marine Assault Squadron.

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SEA CADETS



● *Lt (SCC) Peter Killick RNR presents a plastic duck bearing the TS Echo crest to Cdr Irvine Lindsay*

CO gets the bird from Llanelli

SHIP'S badges make good gifts in Naval circles.

Plastic ducks are another thing all together....

But the CO of HMS Trenchant, Cdr Irvine Lindsay, was happy to accept just such a gift from the **Llanelli** unit, as he has followed the progress of TS Echo's ducks over the course of a number of duck races.

TS Echo cadets count themselves very fortunate to be affiliated to a submarine, so when members of the boat's crew visited Llanelli to catch up with affiliates, the CO and his Logistics Officer, Lt Matt Rees, were invited to the training ship.

The officers spoke to cadets about life on board submarines, then Cdr Lindsay was presented with the duck, complete with the TS Echo crest.

Students flock to TS Iveston

TS IVESTON, the retired minesweeper owned by **Thurrock** unit, can look back on a busy year.

The former Ton-class ship, berthed at Tilbury Docks, hosted numerous marine engineering (ME) courses, and billeted up to 30 youngsters on board at a time.

The summer holidays saw a National Class 1 ME (Mechanical) course alongside two **London Area** Class 3 ME courses and two Level 2 power boating courses.

During October half-term a National Class 1 ME (Electrical) course ran in parallel with a National Junior ME Instructors course and a Class 2 ME course for the London area.

Including two maintenance cadets – POC Risk of **Thurrock** unit and Cdt L/Cpl Alexander of **Hornchurch**, who assisted Lt (SCC) George Wilson RNR in the operation of the ship – up to 30 cadets at a time, from as far away as Cumbria, were accommodated.

Cooking was undertaken by Gill Haines, Thurrock's treasurer, even though the oven did show signs of giving up the ghost – repairs should have been completed by the time *Navy News* went to press.

Capt Mark Windsor, Captain Sea Cadets, dropped in to speak to students about their courses, and found most were very taken with the opportunity to learn new skills in such a unique training 'establishment'.

CUTTing crew

MEMBERS of the **West Ham** unit held a Continuation Unit Team Training (CUTT) course at HMS Raleigh.

Also there providing a little friendly competition were cadets from **Clapton and Hackney** and **Newham Cornwell VC** units.

The youngsters tackled an assault course, learned drill and sea survival and got to steer a boat through Plymouth Harbour.

West Ham took the Vigilant Trophy for the best unit at Raleigh in 2010 – not just a great result for the cadets, but also for Lt Cdr Mark Weston RNR, leading his last such course after stepping down as Commanding Officer of the unit in the summer.

Expedition to Africa 'changed my life'

IN EARLY 2009 OC Naomi Manger was reading through her weekly Sea Cadet newsletter when she saw an article about a trip to South Africa to celebrate Cadet 150.

Her mother said the chances of Naomi winning a place were small, but she may as well go for it, so the **Warsash** unit cadet posted off her letter of application.

A couple of months later a letter arrived saying she had been short-listed, and was invited to attend a selection weekend.

An excited Naomi went through the team-building activities, feeling a little shy as she was still only 15 while some of her rivals were aged up to 19.

Another nervous wait – then her CO at the time, Lt (SCC) Ron Cheek RNR, broke the good news – Naomi had won a place on the 60-strong expedition to South Africa and Lesotho.

All she had to do was raise £1,000...

A climb up Snowdon, a whip-round at her mother's wedding and appeals to friends and family saw Naomi hit her target, and with Christmas presents in the form of vouchers for outdoor shop vouchers she was well on her way.

Training weekends culminated in a session for all 60 cadets in Wales, and the 20km walk ended with a surprise meeting with Prince Harry, whose charity – Sentebale – the cadets would be working with.

"He was such a nice man..." recalled Naomi, adding: "He told us that the people of the Lesotho and the experience of their country would change ourselves, and he was definitely right."

Although the nerves kicked in at the thought of being so far from home, out of contact with family, as she met up with other cadets at Uxbridge the night before the flight Naomi got caught up with the excitement.

"When we got to Johannesburg I was tired and just wanted to sleep," said Naomi.

"It took us five hours on the coach to get to our base camp, Em'seni, where we would stay for a week in order to get acclimatised.

"I loved it at this place – it was nice and warm during the day but freezing at night."

Although a little homesick, a full programme – including a strenuous escorted walk up the steep slopes to the Boer War killing field of Spion Kop – kept Naomi and her colleagues busy; they also had to train in first aid, river crossing and carrying an injured person.

"As well as this we had to attend an environmental awareness camp at Weenen Game Reserve, where we spent two nights in tents in the African bush," said Naomi.

"We went on two safari drives and saw all sorts of animals, including giraffe, zebra, meerkats, warthog and loads of varieties of antelope.

"We also saw black rhino and white rhino with a two-week old calf.

"It was an amazing experience seeing these animals in their natural habitat, completely different from seeing them in a zoo.

"At Weenen we watched a guide dissect a blessbuck antelope. It was disgusting, yet really interesting.

"After a week in South Africa we set off on a 12-hour drive into Lesotho, a country inside South Africa. This is where our real adventure would start.

"We spent ten days in Lesotho, on seven of which we would work on our charity projects.

"Our team stayed in a town called Mokhotlong and worked with a charity named Touching Tiny Lives (TTL).

"This is where babies are taken in because their parents are not in the right state to look after their children.



● *Cadets work on the garden and meet one of the children at Touching Tiny Lives in Lesotho – Naomi is holding the baby (right)*

"TTL educates the families in looking after babies and most of the babies at the centre return to their families.

"Most of the babies have HIV and when they come to TTL they are extremely malnourished.

"The people at TTL work so hard to make these babies better, constantly giving them medication and love and affection.

"Unfortunately they can't save every baby, however they do their best.

"It was so emotional seeing these babies and I just wanted to help and do anything I could for them.

"But I learnt the best thing we could do was give them love and lots of cuddles.

"We also donated so many baby clothes."

There was also some hard physical work – building a fence around the garden, turning the soil in the vegetable patch ready for the rainy season, and painting a huge sign on the wall to let people know where TTL was.

"I loved it in Lesotho," said Naomi. "The locals all knew who we were, and by the end of our time there we were dancing with them, literally.

"It's so different from England – we're so lucky with what we have.

"Having no telly or anything was great – we all just played games and just talked. I even learnt how to play the guitar!"

The trip ended with a three-day expedition in the Lesotho mountains.

"This was the hardest part of the trip, and the hardest expedition I have ever done," said Naomi.



"We were camping in temperatures of -20°C – it was so cold that we had ice inside our tent.

"Every time someone moved, the ice would come down and it was like it was snowing inside our tent.

"I feel the cold so much and I think that is what made it so hard.

"Our expedition was to climb Thabana Ntlenyana, and the views from this point were amazing.

"I almost cried as I was so proud of myself. There were times when I just wanted to go home, but with the help of the team I pulled through, and now I had stood on the highest mountain in South Africa.

"After this expedition we went to Sani Top pub, the highest pub in Africa and had the most amazing meal ever.

"That night was our last in Lesotho so we celebrated and sang songs around the fire with a guitar.

"We were all sad to leave Lesotho but we were also proud of each other and happy we had made our time there one to always remember.

"The morning after our last night in Lesotho, we walked out of Lesotho, down the Sani Pass, and back into South Africa, where the next couple of days we spent attending battlefield tours.

"However, the first thing I did when I got back to Em'seni was have a shower – none of us had showered in seven days as the water was freezing where we were staying.

"Our final night in South Africa was one night I will never forget – we had a party with all 60 cadets and leaders, with a bonfire, BBQ, and music.

"We exchanged stories of our projects and experiences and said our goodbyes.

"My time in Africa was truly wonderful, and I really believe I came home a different person.

"I am more mature now, I don't take things for granted as much, and I really appreciate having a family, as I know that some children will never know their parents.

"I learnt so much from this trip and I intend to teach my peers about this experience; however, they will not fully understand how I felt.

"So Prince Harry was right – this trip and the people of Lesotho did touch my heart and change my life.

"I see things so differently to how I did before I went.

"I'm so grateful to the Sea Cadets for giving me this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – if I wasn't in the Cadets I would probably never have done anything like this."



● *Cadets set out on a trip during their expedition to South Africa*

Hereford gathers momentum

MEMBERS of the **Hereford** unit are on a roll.

PPO Charlotte Robinson is believed to be the youngest person to pass the National Officer Selection Board (OSB) at the age of 18 years, and by April she will be a Midshipman within the SCC.

This was followed by POC Courtney Aston achieving the top mark for all POC Advancements in the South West Area – out of 79 units – during the last calendar year.

POC Aston is also the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Herefordshire, while further success came for her and AC Hannah Green in the form of the CVQO BTEC Award in Public Service, equivalent to four GCSEs at A* to C grade.

Another cause for celebration was the fact that two cadets, LC Williamson and AC Bevan, have passed all the criteria to join the Royal Navy and just await their place.

And finally, Hereford has been awarded the burgee standard, placing the unit in the top 25 per cent of Sea Cadet units in the country.

Looking ahead, plans have been lodged with Herefordshire Council for the unit's new headquarters.

TA Antelope has been in its existing building, situated on the banks of the River Wye for over 70 years, but the HQ has come to the end of its working life and needs to be replaced.

More than £70,000 has been raised in just over a year, but more is needed to complete the project – and the unit would love to hear from anybody who could contribute in any way.

Bridlington CCF team on the Rock

TEN cadets and accompanying officers led by Wg Cdr Sue Shilladay RAF VR(T), drawn from all three sections of **Bridlington School CCF**, celebrated Cadet 150 and the school's CCF centenary with a visit to Gibraltar.

The group took part in the Trafalgar Day commemorations, which they found extremely moving.

The training programme included two days on the water courtesy of the Royal Navy, during which the cadets added to their dinghy sailing and kayaking qualifications and enjoyed exploring the coastline in RIBs.

High winds added to the sailing thrills but caused the cancellation of climbing – an hour in the RIB proved an acceptable alternative!

There were also the obligatory visits to meet the monkeys, tour the tunnels, shelter from the heat in St Michael's Cave, take a ferry to Algeciras and stroll down to Europa Point.

Staff have also passed on their thanks to Clyde Naval Base for hosting 20 cadets.

The youngsters toured a submarine and a minehunter, and improved their marksmanship skills on the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer (DCCT).

A look round a fire station and a ride in a fire engine never goes amiss, either...

There was time for physical training too, in the pool and on the dry ski slope, as well as a chat with the bomb disposal team.

The affiliation between Faslane and the CCF goes from strength to strength, and although the contingent is not a recruitment organisation, it can certainly whet the appetite – one former cadet is currently flying Sea Kings in Afghanistan, another is training at Dartmouth after passing out in July as a sub-lieutenant RN, and another joined HMS Raleigh as a warfare specialist in early October.

Queensferry quintet win certificates

FIVE members of **Queensferry** unit have been presented with Certificates in Public Services after completing a year-long course.

Training in the evenings and at weekends under the auspices of the Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation (CVQO), the cadets studied the theory and practice of leadership, teamwork, communications, problem-solving and fitness.

Along the way they learned skills as varied as interview techniques, communication, first aid, adventure training, health and nutrition and professional CV preparation.

The five were MC Daniel Irvine, Katie Morham, Joel Robertson, Ryan Scappaticcio and Falon Mackie.

The five were presented with their BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificates in Public Services by Cdr (SCC) Barry Glanville RNR, Assistant Director Cadet Training at the National Sea Cadet Training Centre, HMS Raleigh.

The CO of TS Lochinvar, Lt (SCC) Colin Butcher RNR, said: "Our unit is one of the front-runners in providing this type of training to Sea and Royal Marine Cadets.

"I am very proud of my cadets – they have set a high standard for others to follow, and this qualification will put them in good stead for the future."

Golden haul for Reigate competitors

REIGATE cadets won gold medals in sailing, kayaking and swimming at National and Southern area competitions towards the end of last year.

AC Bailey and LC Baxendale won gold in the Bosun Class sailing event at the National Sailing Regatta, held at Southport in Lancashire.

Earlier, at the National Combined Regatta at ExCeL in London, OC Lewis won gold in the kayak one-mile marathon – winning by an impressive margin of 200 yards.

She then went on to win another gold in the 400m sprint, and a bronze in the relay.

In the Southern Area regatta AC Francis won the kayak junior boys' double marathon and sprint.

More gold medals were bagged at the Southern Area swimming championships, held at Sandhurst Military Academy.

OC Ballantyne and Cdt Murphy won the heats and the final in the relay event, while Cdts Walker and Murphy won the overall trophy in the B-class girls' event.

The cadets had qualified for this event by winning at the Surrey District competition held earlier this year.

The unit believes it to be an outstanding achievement, and is very proud of the efforts of the cadets, instructors and parents at TS Ark Royal.

Norwich meet up with Pudsey Bear

TWO good causes in one afternoon – **Norwich** unit cadets had their work cut out the day before the Remembrance Sunday parade.

The youngsters, accompanied by staff, helped the Royal British Legion sell poppies outside the Chapelfield shopping complex, keeping busy to stay warm in freezing conditions.

Helping keep them entertained – particularly the junior cadets – was Pudsey Bear, who was there to raise awareness for Children in Need.

As they were released from poppy duties, the cadets swamped Pudsey to have their pictures taken – one of the group having furnished the bear with his cap.



● *A North-West cadet with semaphore flags at the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester* Pictures: Paul Heyes

Units fly the flag for museum exhibition



MEMBERS of **Altrincham**, **Salford** and **Fleetwood** units helped celebrate the 150th anniversary of the cadet movement at Imperial War Museum North.

Coinciding with the Manchester museum's *All Aboard: Stories of War at Sea* exhibition, the cadets put on a display of seafaring skills and maritime traditions for visitors.

The day of events got off to a colourful start as the cadets showed off their semaphore skills with a display of the traditional seafaring communication using brightly-decorated flags.

Visitors to the museum were also treated to a display of hornpipe dancing as the cadets performed the traditional "jig of the ship" to the music of a tin whistle and violins.

For those looking for an unexpected way to keep in trim, the cadets demonstrated the practice of Indian club swinging, which has its roots in India and Persia and was a popular form of exercise for sailors and soldiers which flourished during the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Cadets and visitors alike were also able to explore the newest exhibition at the museum.

This, the Imperial War Museum's first large-scale exhibition to look at life at sea in wartime, reveals stories of bravery and adventure at sea, from 1914 to the present day.

● *Sea Cadets from the North-West celebrate Cadet 150 by demonstrating their communications skills at the Imperial War Museum North*

The free exhibition contains many objects on public display for the first time, all linked to the stories of those who have fought at sea.

These include part of a ship's gun damaged during the first sea battle of World War 1, medals awarded for bravery at Dunkirk, and a uniform worn by a woman who worked on preparations for D-Day.

There is a chance to talk like a sailor by picking up Jackspeak – a family-friendly version of the no-holds-barred naval slang – and seeing if Naval clothing would have kept you warm on the icy deck of a warship in the Arctic.

You might also learn about the Navy's menagerie of animals over the years, from an ocean-going reindeer to Tirpitz the pig.

The exhibition runs until April.

Jacquie Truswell, Officer in Charge of the City of Salford unit, said: "The celebration for Cadet150 is a fantastic way to honour the role of the cadet force over the years.

"All of the cadets enjoyed showing off their skills in front of visitors at the museum and having great fun as well."

Camilla Southall, Visitor Programmes Manager at the museum, said: "We were delighted to be able to welcome the Sea Cadets to the Imperial War Museum North.

"Our All Aboard exhibition brings to life dramatic personal experiences of war at sea, so it is fantastic to be able to see some of the traditions of the sea, which would have been part of Navy life, in action."

www.iwm.org.uk/allaboard

Diamond day for Warsash

THE Junior Cadets of **Warsash** unit were lucky enough to be invited to visit one of the Navy's newest ships – HMS Diamond.

The Type 45 destroyer is one of the most capable air-defence warships in the world today, and while on board the eight cadets and three members of staff were given an in-depth personal tour by S/Lt Platt.

During their tour the youngsters even got to see a fire and damage control exercise first-hand.

Among the highlights of the tour was a look around the bridge, going out on to the expansive flight deck, along to the operations room – and a break and some sustenance in the form of biscuits in the wardroom.

One of the cadets, JC Lucy Tuff, was chosen to dress up in the personal protective equipment used by firefighters on the ship, and went on to sit in the captain's chair on the bridge.



● *Warsash junior cadets on board HMS Diamond with S/Lt Platt*



● *Martin Coles*

New CEO appointed by MSSC

THE Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), the parent charity of the Sea Cadets, has welcomed two new members of staff.

Martin Coles has been appointed Chief Executive and replaces outgoing CEO Mike Cornish, who is retiring.

Coles joins the charity from BNP Paribas Real Estate UK, where he was an executive director of the 11th largest industrial and commercial property consultancy in the UK.

Coles is a passionate supporter of young people, over the years working as a volunteer for several youth groups in London and Birmingham.

He said: "I am really excited to be joining the MSSC.

"It is a fine organisation with a considerable heritage and huge talent in its people, staff and volunteers, who together have an amazing track record of valuable service to youth and professional seafarers.

"I hope that with my experience in leading people businesses, my passion for youth, interest in sailing and desire to be part of an organisation that is actively engaged in helping our wider community, I can play a part in the delivery of the next exciting chapter of MSSC."

Also appointed is Dan Jardine as assistant director of training.

Dan is a teacher and youth work manager and was formerly Director of Culture for the Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe.

On moving to the UK he worked with the British Red Cross in Scotland and joined the MSSC in 2009 as a youth development worker.

Bonfire bonus

A BONFIRE and fireworks evening at **Northampton and Wellingborough** unit raised £200 for the replacement of equipment.

And cadets and staff also played their part in helping the Royal British Legion raise more than £1,600 for the annual poppy appeal, following it up by putting more than 100 Sea and Marine Cadets and 28 instructors in the field for various Remembrance ceremonies across the county.

A member of the unit's watersports instructional staff, PO (SCC) Sam Green, has been recognised by the RYA as Young Volunteer of the Year.

SUPPORT YOUR SEA CADETS

Volunteer, donate or even leave a legacy

Visit sea-cadets.org or call 020 7654 7000

SEA CADETS

A charity registered in England and Wales 313013 and in Scotland SC037808

SEA CADETS

Drummers make their public debut

TEWKESBURY unit's first Pickle Night went like clockwork, thanks to the detailed planning and preparation carried out by Petty Officers (SCC) Mark Hobbs and Sandra McGhee, helped by the Parents and Friends Committee, to buy, prepare and cook the food.

Staff pitched in to serve the tables.

LC Harry Griffiths presided at the top table with VIP guests Lt Cdr (SCC) Jason Kinghorn RNR, unit CO, and chairman Mervyn Woodward on his right and left respectively.

The 'port' for the occasion – a blackcurrant mix – was poured and passed according to traditional Royal Navy protocol and barely a drop was spilled.

Traditional 'fines' were dished out after the meal by OC Keri Macrow to several diners spotted displaying inappropriate table manners – they had to perform a charade, song or dance (or all three) or gargle a song.

For many of the ship's company it was their first experience of RN table etiquette, and the effort was widely appreciated.

Just one point to note by staff for next time – those proficient in the role of Cook Steward said they had served and removed from the wrong side...

2010 was a memorable year for the unit, not least because of the formation of their own Corps of Drums, which began practising once a week a year ago under the leadership of Sqn Ldr (ATC) Rod Gurney.

The group made its debut with the Evesham ATC band at the Armed Forces Day parade in June – and made such a good impression on the town's Mayor that they received their first official booking for the Mayoral Civic Parade.

The six-strong group also performed for the unit at the traditional Trafalgar Night dinner, their synchronised drumming and 'Chopsticks' drawing hearty applause from the 80 guests and VIPs at Gupshill Manor.

Another recent high-profile event for the unit was the Remembrance Sunday parade, for which TS Otter provided a Guard of 12, with four cadets in position around the Memorial Cross.

Stonehaven call

THE Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire, Mrs Carol Kinghorn, has visited **Stonehaven** unit to inspect the ship's company and present awards to cadets and staff.

Michael Smith was promoted to POC after attending an advancement board at HMS Caledonia and passing the Cadet Drill Instructor qualification, while probationary Civilian Instructors Cara Parker and Chris Horn received BTEC Diplomas in Public Services (Distinction Award).

LC Michael Blacklaw accepted the 2010 Burgee Award on behalf of the unit – the 28th year in a row Stonehaven has achieved the highest level of efficiency.



● **Cardiff** *unit had a star-studded VIP list for their Trafalgar Night mess dinner, held at the city's United Services mess. Sitting down with the 42 cadets and 12 staff at the dinner, hosted by CO CPO (SCC) Michael Dixon, were the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, Cdr Peter Beck (pictured above handing over the 2010 Efficiency Pennant to the unit), his Deputy, Cdr John Curteis, former Lord Lieutenant Capt Sir Norman Lloyd-Edwards – who spoke on the surrender of the French and Spanish at the battle – and Capt Peter James, who flew in from the United States to join the celebrations*

Unit visits namesake warship



● *St Albans cadets with the ship's badge given to them by their namesake warship*

THE strong links between HMS St Albans and **TS St Albans**, the city's unit, were further strengthened when the frigate visited London.

Following a joint fundraising event in Hertfordshire when the ship's company and cadets raised over £3,500 for Help For Heroes, volunteers from the ship again travelled up to St Albans to help paint the unit.

Later in the evening 20 cadets and staff were the guests of the warship in the Docklands.

The sailors on the frigate put on a range of demonstrations, including firefighting.

The cadets were also presented with a ship's crest to go in pride of place on the unit's newly-painted bulkheads.

Unit training officer PO (SCC) Ted Hill, said: "We have great links with the ship and are always welcomed on board.

"We do a lot of training at Sea Cadets and have some serious fun, but it's a real eye-opener for everyone to see how the experts do it for real."

Plea for staff from the Tin Tabernacle

AS FAR as headquarters buildings go, the **Willesden and St Marylebone** unit is in a pretty select group.

TS Bicester is situated in an old church in Cambridge Avenue, Kilburn, in London, a building dating back to 1863.

Over the 70 years or so that the cadets have been there, they have managed to give the inside of the building a nautical feel – in fact, there are uncanny resemblances to parts of a ship.

And that conversion was made easier by the fact that the church itself – St James's Episcopal Chapel – was originally constructed of metal.

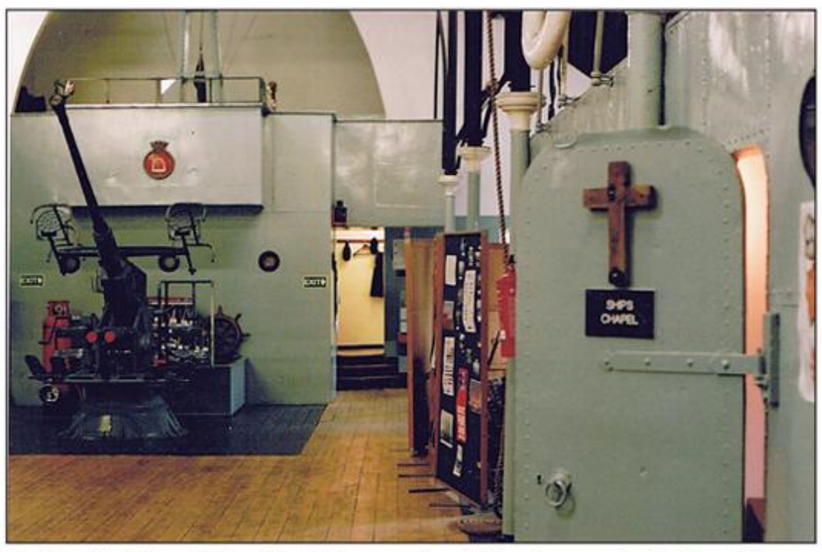
TS Bicester is based at one of Britain's few surviving 'tin tabernacles' or iron churches – buildings made of corrugated iron and designed to be quickly and cheaply erected as a home for a new congregation or as extra space for an expanding church.

Many were available in kit form, and most have long-since gone; some were replaced by more permanent brick or stone structures as the congregation became established, others deteriorated and had to be replaced as rust took its toll, while some were simply flattened to make way for other land use.

St James's took on a nautical feel as TS Bicester established itself, but now the building is in need of major renovation, and the unit is working with local groups to raise funds to preserve and upgrade the building, making it an asset for the wider community as well as a working base for the cadets.

The unit has been operating from temporary headquarters in St Johns Wood for a period, but as it looks to the future, the management committee has issued a plea for volunteers to help train cadets, and anyone keen to help steer the Tin Tabernacle out of choppy waters.

For those interested in joining the staff, helping cadets gain as much as possible from their time in the Corps, previous military experience is not necessary but would obviously be helpful.



● *The inside of the Tin Tabernacle, Willesden and St Marylebone unit's headquarters in Kilburn, London*

There are also places available on the unit's management team, working on all aspects of running a busy unit.

Any assistance in this area would be gratefully received, and the unit is just as keen to hear from anyone who could help further the conservation and restoration project by providing skills and expertise.

Contact the unit at wills_stmarylescc@live.co.uk, see the website http://units.ms-sc.org/willesden/default, or call Chris Price on 02027 624 8340.

Great race, great result

CADETS from **Walton-on-the-Naze** unit entered two teams in the Great River Race, rowing 21 gruelling miles from London Docklands to Richmond, Surrey.

More than 300 teams took part in this annual event, with some competitors travelling from far afield as Holland and Germany to join in the fun.

The race also gave the cadets from TS Illustrious the first opportunity to try out the replacement for the ageing ASC.

The new lightweight Trinity 500 proved as good as they had hoped, allowing them to shave an hour off the normal time for the older craft.

The Royal Marine Cadets completing the race in 4h 18m with the Sea Cadets close behind in 4h 28m.

This year the cadets also decided to row for charity, and have raised a total of £2,064.50 for SSAFA Forces Help, who are celebrating 125 years of service and support to the Armed Forces and those who used to serve.

CO S/Lt (SCC) Gary Dodd RNR said it was amazing what young people could do when they put their minds to it – and it also completed the volunteering section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award as well.

For this year the senior cadets will be forming a cadet fundraising committee and will sponsor a particular charity for the forthcoming year.



● *Lesley Brown and Ellis Kent, both from Walton-on-the-Naze unit TS Illustrious, pictured at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in London – just two of the many cadets who took part in or helped out at the event*

Picture: Les Scriver (RBL)

Black Swan seeks new leader

WANTED – an enthusiastic leader for a thriving London Sea Cadet unit.

The CO of **Sunbury and Walton** unit, Phil Hunter, is stepping down in March after four years because of ill health, and the unit now needs a volunteer, male or female, with Royal Navy experience to lead the team.

The role includes overseeing training and administration within the unit, ensuring proper discipline amongst staff and cadets and ensuring the safety of cadets, staff and visitors, to oversee ship's routines, and the effective running of the unit.

TS Black Swan held its first parade on March 17 1943 and has been an active unit ever since.

Today it boasts a strong ship's company, including a junior section.

The unit is situated on the banks of the River Thames, just below Walton Bridge, Surrey, in Penny Lane – and cadets at Black Swan believe it is the best site of all units in the District.

Being right by the river,



● *Sunbury and Walton unit cadets on the River Thames during a fundraising event*

cadets at Sunbury and Walton are able to spend the majority of their time honing their skills in rowing, sailing, canoeing and power boating, moving over to knowledge-based activities through the winter months, including the unit's specialisation in drill.

Black Swan has an assortment of boats including three Admiralty Sailing Craft and two new Trinity 500s for pulling, a Cheverton Champ, Viking and Dory for power boating, two Toppers for sailing and a selection of canoes.

Potential recruits for the top job should contact unit chairwoman Gail Cramp on 01932 889244 (evenings), mobile: 07922 191781 or gail.cramp@btinternet.com



● *Capt Steve Murdoch during the inspection of Plymouth College CCF contingent cadets*

Colleges join forces

THE top man at HMS Raleigh has carried out the biennial inspection of **Plymouth College**'s CCF contingent.

Capt Steve Murdoch, CO at the Cornish training establishment, formally inspected the cadets, split into RN, Army and RAF sections.

He took the salute, and also watched as the students demonstrated their skills, including the firing of weapons on the range and a communications command task in the school grounds.

Plymouth College has recently entered into a pioneering initiative with **Stoke Damerel Community College** in Plymouth, in which Stoke Damerel students join Plymouth College's CCF to form one contingent.

Capt Murdoch said: "The aim of the CCF is to provide an opportunity for young people to develop a sense of responsibility and the qualities of self-reliance, resourcefulness, endurance, perseverance and a sense of service to the community, while in a disciplined environment.

"It is hoped that these personal attributes will remain of value to the cadets throughout their lives and will be relevant in whatever career they pursue.

"Plymouth College and Stoke Damerel Community College should be commended for their joint initiative.

"The cadets were well turned out and the programme of training on offer is a credit to both schools."

Air cadet dives in

THE last Sea Cadet diving course of the year has been run at the cadets' dedicated diving centre at **TS Neptune** in **Liverpool**.

Cadets joined the ship one autumn Sunday, and there followed five days of hard work, including three days of diving in the open, during a week that was very cold.

Because of the falling temperatures, students learned some theory and got some pool time in, which allowed them to warm up.

The big difference between this course and the other courses run at Neptune since 2001 is that it was tri-Service.

The first ATC cadet to take part, from **90 (Speke) Squadron ATC**, proved she had fins as well as wings and passed – appropriately enough – with flying colours.

Training call

CADETS and teaching staff from **Royal Grammar School Guildford CCF** visited HMS Collingwood to see the training on offer.

Cadets tried out the Close Range Weapon Simulator, and were briefed on the mine warfare and communications sections, where they had their second practical session.

They then went on to see how to manoeuvre warships and helicopters.



Hun and hysteria

WITH the nation still rejoicing over trouncing the troublesome squadron of Admiral von Spee, Britain's hubris was rudely shattered at dawn on December 16 1914.

For the first time in a century, civilians on British soil were killed by an enemy power; the Empire's mother country had been violated.

Ruin came from the air – but not from Zeppelins.

No, it came from the guns of the High Seas Fleet, which closed to within a few hundred yards of the East Coast.

Bombarded were the towns of Hartlepool, Whitby and Scarborough.

Of these, only Hartlepool was a 'legitimate target' – there were warships in port and the town was defended by coastal batteries.

Hartlepool suffered the most damage – and the most dead, 86 of the 137 people killed that Wednesday – but history has come to know it as the 'Scarborough raid'.

Using contemporary newspaper reports, extracts from official documents and Hansard, Bob Clarke looks to set the 'tip and run' raid against the backdrop of a decade of growing hostility between London and Berlin in **Remember Scarborough** (*Amberley*, £12.99 ISBN 978-1-84868-111-8).

It also provides a good insight into the psychological mood of the British public in the first months of the Great War.

Indeed, while Britons were confident in the supremacy of their Navy, they were worried by the prospect of an invasion.

What you have in the autumn of 1914 is a threat akin to the summer of 1940: beaches were strewn with barbed wire, roads leading inland were blocked (chiefly with sandbags) and troops – mainly territorials – were peppered along the coast to safeguard it, such as the 'formidable' 7th (Cyclists) Battalion holding 70 miles of shore from Whitley Bay to Scarborough.

And there was 'spy' hysteria akin to McCarthyism in 1950s USA: German spies or sympathisers roamed up and down the East Coast signalling 'their' ships at sea, 'guiding' enemy vessels through minefields and so on.

So it's not entirely surprising that reaction to the 'Scarborough raid' wasn't especially measured. The RN got it in the neck for allowing an inferior Navy to penetrate home waters, but not as much as the beastly Hun for another act of frightfulness (they'd already bayoneted babies, chopped off children's hands and gouged civilians' eyes out in Belgium...).

There was another round of anti-German hysteria (Scarborough's mayor likened the Kaiser to King Herod, while 'Germans' furtively left Hartlepool and Scarborough just hours after the bombardment), a flurry of commemorative postcards were produced, while recruiting posters urged Britons to sign on to avenge the atrocity: 'Men of Britain, will you stand for this?'

But not everyone in Scarborough was whipped into a frenzy by the German raid.

In the middle of the hour-long bombardment, one Scarborian popped into his butcher's for 1lb of bacon. "I have never cut bacon under such irritating circumstances," the shopkeeper fumed. "Business as usual is all very well, but there are limits..."



● *A Royal Marine from 11 Troop, M Company, 42 Commando responds to Taleban fire with 51mm light mortars in the Afghan village of Chinah during Operation Volcano*

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RNPOTYx2

Corps values

IMAGINE *Globe and Laurel* **in book form.**

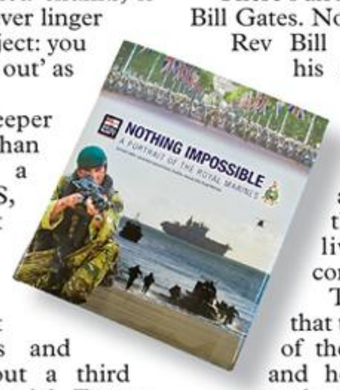
Ok, that's a pretty simplistic way of looking at the officially-endorsed **Nothing Impossible: A Portrait of the Royal Marines** (*Third Millennium*, £45 ISBN 978-1-906507237), but it gives you an idea of the concept.

Nothing Impossible casts its panoramic net over all aspects of life in the Royal Marines from smashing Taleban compounds in Helmand or assaulting the Al Faw peninsula to the ceremonial duties of the Band Service, cadets and the Royal Marine Association – once a marine, always a marine.

In casting that net, it uses a full array of 'fishermen' from the man at the top (Commandant General Maj Gen Buster Howes) to corporals on the front line in Helmand and marines safeguarding Britain's nuclear deterrent.

So in that respect it's like *Globe and Laurel*, the Corps' long-standing journal. Royals writing about Royal-y things for fellow Royals (minus the in-jokes which are both a source of wonderment and bafflement in *G&L*).

The result is as good a 'guidebook' to the Royal Marines as they are today as you'll find. It's not in depth, of course, but as the overview of the Corps is presented in bite-sized chunks, it also means you'll never linger too long on one subject: you can 'dip in' and 'dip out' as you please.



You can dip deeper into some areas than others; there is a chapter on the SBS, the RM counterpart to the (more famous) SAS, but other than an acknowledgment that (a) it exists and (b) comprises about a third of the nation's Special Forces, don't expect any revelations; the account of the Special Boat Service presented here ends in the 1950s.

Luckily, other elements of the Corps are more forthcoming. For example there's an insight into O Sqn FPGRM – people who don't get a lot of publicity because, as Mne Mark Sharp points out, the duty is of a "repetitive nature", protecting the nuclear deterrent at Faslane. Luckily, there's morning PT led by a different green beret every day to spice things up a bit...

There's also a contribution from Bill Gates. Not Mr Microsoft, but Rev Bill Gates who earned his green beret before joining 45 Cdo in Helmand. His name was a source of "endless amusement", but that's typical of living alongside commandos.

That closeness meant that the 'bish' knew many of the fallen very well – and he felt their loss as much as any comrade.

"My thousand-yard stare was no different from those around me – I hardly noticed the rockets that were fired at us," he writes. "The emptiness I felt took several days to subside."

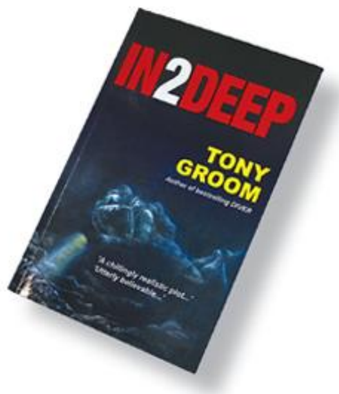
Trying to ensure that Rev Gates and his brethren wouldn't have to officiate at funerals was Surg Lt Lara Herbert, unit medic with Commando Logistic Regiment. She was inspired by a stint with the US Marine Corps to serve with its UK counterpart as a front-line surgeon.

She passed the All-Arms Commando Course which permits her to wear the coveted green beret, presented in a rather understated ceremony. "I think, but cannot guarantee, that I was the only commando who celebrated in high heels that night," she says. We think it's a safe bet she *wasn't*...

CLR men died during Surg Lt Herbert's tour of duty. It fell to her not only to try to save them when they were brought into the field hospital, but also to convey news of their deaths to comrades.

"Dealing with the aftermath of a British death in Afghanistan was different from anything I had experienced in the NHS – I had a deeper connection with all the people involved," she says.

This is a very nicely-produced volume, packed with images from commando unit and RN photographers. The only downside is the price tag: £45 (discounted prices online aren't much cheaper) may well deter many from investing in this excellent book.



Novel move by ex-bubblehead

NOT many clearance divers turn their hand to writing, but fresh from his memoir *Diver*, Tony Groom has now turned to fiction.

In2Deep (*La Puce*, £9.95 ISBN 978-09562-69119) is, says Tony – who spent ten years as a RN clearance diver – "an action-packed thriller with a nautical setting".

Tony explains that *In2Deep* was written "even before I had finished *Diver*, or got a publisher for it, I had started my novel. My missus thought I was mad. But it's a bug, and I've got it.

"I started writing by accident really. A friend of mine was doing safety diving in London for a film, and the producer was talking to him about doing something on the Falklands.

"My friend said, 'I know a lad who was down there doing all the bomb and mine disposal. He kept a diary about it all.' The producer argued with him, saying it was the Army that did all the UXBs.

"A few weeks later the BBC were on the phone. They wanted to come to my house and film me reading my diaries.

"They were hidden away in my loft and I had quite honestly never read them. I read them for the first time on breakfast TV.

"The cameraman and producer said it was a fascinating story. Had I ever thought of joining up the gaps and writing it all down? I said 'no', but I started that night and couldn't stop."

He added: "I wrote day and night for a year until *Diver* was done. It's now sold over 30,000 copies, which is astonishing for an unknown, uneducated, ex-bubblehead."

We have four signed copies of *In2Deep* to give away thanks to Tony. To win tell us the name of the Navy diver who vanished in mysterious circumstances in Portsmouth Harbour in 1956.

Send your answers to in2deep@navynews.co.uk or In2Deep Competition, Navy News, Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH.

Entries must be received by noon on February 14 2011.

O brave Benbow was his name

ADMIRAL Benbow is one of the legendary figures of British Naval history.

His death in controversial circumstances in 1702 has become a symbol of the clash between 'gentleman' and 'tarpaulin' officers after the Restoration of the Crown and the birth of the 'Royal Navy' in 1660, *writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.*

His name was immortalised as the name for the tavern at which Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island* begins. This was but one of a series of fictions associated with Benbow that have obscured the qualities of a truly great officer.

The record has been put straight by Sam Willis in the second of his 'Hearts of Oak' trilogy, **The Admiral Benbow: The Life and Times of a Naval Legend** (*Quercus*, £25 ISBN 978-1-84916-036-0).

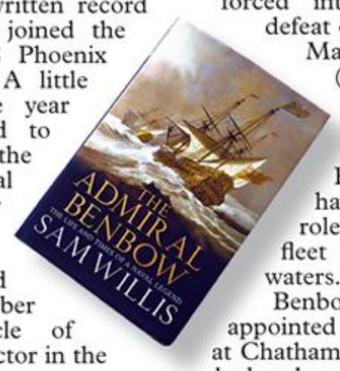
John Benbow is more than a man and this is more than a biography. It sets Benbow against the background of his times and is a notable contribution to the history of the late 17th-Century Navy. The author has trawled the archives in a remarkable way and has produced as many questions as answers.

Benbow's background is obscure. He was probably born in 1652 in the chaotic and partially-recorded aftermath of the wars of the mid-17th Century. The story of the tanner's son who ran away to sea is probably a legend; he was, in all probability, a member of a family of Shropshire landed gentry which had fallen on hard times for supporting the losing Royalists.

It seems certain that he probably learned his ship-handling in the hard school of being a waterman's apprentice in a Severn barge.

The Grove Review

It is not clear when Benbow joined the Royal Navy but he emerges into the written record in 1678 when he joined the Fourth Rate HMS Phoenix as master's mate. A little later in the same year he was transferred to HMS Rupert, the flagship of Admiral Herbert (later Lord Torrington). Benbow impressed the admiral and became a member of Herbert's circle of patronage, a vital factor in the progress of his career.



Herbert was confronting Algerine pirates in the Mediterranean and supporting the short-lived English colony at Tangier.

The first controversy in Benbow's life arose when there was a dispute over who had captured a powerful Algerine ship. Benbow's HMS Nonsuch had intervened late in the engagement but claimed the ship as prize. The controversy led to Benbow voicing open criticism of the other ship's captain. Herbert protected his man, but Benbow was now marked as a member of Herbert's faction in a deeply-split service.

Unsurprisingly Benbow was not immediately re-employed and worked for a time as a merchant ship captain on the Mediterranean run, during which he may have delivered the heads of dead Barbary Corsairs to Spanish magistrates. He then may well have joined Herbert in his defection to William of Orange and been in the successful invasion fleet of 1688.

Benbow certainly prospered from regime change. Serving in the fleet flagship, Royal Sovereign, Benbow was part of Torrington's 'fleet in being' in 1690 that was forced into an unnecessary defeat off Beachy Head. As Master of the flagship (a not unusual appointment for a captain skilled in seamanship) Benbow may well have played a significant role in navigating the fleet through dangerous waters.

Benbow had already been appointed Master Attendant at Chatham Dockyard and then asked to be moved to the similar position at Deptford. He was clearly a success in this role ashore which he later combined with work at sea in a littoral bombardment offensive against the French coast. As well as operational command, Benbow played a key role as dockyard manager in the development of mortar vessels and floating bomb 'machine vessels'.

The viciousness of some of these operations, many of which were deliberately directed against civilian targets, is noteworthy – a reflection of the often ignored ideological dimension of the nine-year War of the League of Augsburg.

In 1696 Benbow was promoted Rear Admiral (he had been paid as such since 1694) and left Deptford to be involved in convoy work, often the preferred escort commander of the merchants, a sign of Benbow's reputation.

Then in 1702 came the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession. Benbow, as the expert on the theatre, had already been redeployed to the Caribbean. This led to the unfortunate last fight off Cape Santa Marta when his captains did not support him and he was wounded with eventually fatal results.

Willis demolishes the myth that master versus tarpaulin tensions were at work. The real problems were the basic ones of a chasing squadron of the time in forcing action with an enemy that did not want to be engaged and the mixed overall quality of officers at the start of a war. One suspects, too, that politics and faction had a role to play in that very factious age.

The scandal resulted in two of the captains shot for cowardice, while Benbow became a heroic celebrity thanks to the newly liberated press.

This celebrity, which has continued through the years, has perhaps tended to obscure Benbow's nature as a highly-capable officer both afloat and ashore. He clearly deserves his fame and is more than just a legend. Willis makes this clear and he also uses Benbow as a vehicle to shed a great deal of light on the wider context of what was still the formative stage in the history of the Royal Navy, an institution that was clearly far from mature.

Willis' book is a notable piece of naval historical writing, handsomely published, with useful appendices, copious endnotes, excellent illustrations and is highly recommended.

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SPORT



● *Mne Stu Pirie of RM Poole negotiates the slalom at Tignes*
Picture: Richard Olsen

Smells like Tignes spirit

"YOU have no angulation on your inner knee, your hip is too far back which means you are getting late on the gates. Do it again."

These are words which are often barked at even the best of the Royal Navy's **skiers** as they're put through their paces at the annual January training camp in France, *writes Lt Rob Corcoran (COMATG)*.

And 2011 is no different. This month Arthur Steiner, who's been coaching the RN team for 19 years, is once again turning sailors into racers ahead of February's Inter-Service Championships.

The men's and ladies' teams train together at the beginning of each new year for two weeks before competing for domestic honours at the RN Championships which will again be held at the excellent resort of Tignes.

Every member of the team competes in all four disciplines: slalom, giant slalom, super G and downhill – all of which demand a high level of technical ability, strength and fitness to last the distance.

Mr Steiner's training is of the highest standard with his impeccable attention to detail producing impressive results every year.

Last year alone he took eight skiers out of their comfort zone from holiday skiers to Inter-Service level in no more than four weeks.

Constant training runs and feedback using video analysis means there is nowhere to hide and only the most committed will progress to Inter-Service level.

The excitement of alpine ski racing is more than worth the hard work that is needed to compete.

If you are a competent skier who would like to take it to the next stage of screaming down the Olympic run in the Inter-Services at Meribel 2012 – and the benefits of world class ski coaching – contact team captain Lt Chris Sharrott (Christopher.Sharrott990@mod.uk).



● *Lt Cdr Jon Platt helps the RN/RM kitesurfers to victory off the North Devon coast*

Hi Ho! Silver kiting

THE biggest military **kitesurfing** event to date saw the Royal Navy and Royal Marines triumph over their Forces foes.

The third Inter-Services kitesurfing championships took place in challenging conditions (always a good euphemism...) at Westward Ho! in Devon.

More than 40 personnel took part, but only the Senior Servicemen ruled the waves.

Big air and powered tricks in gusty conditions were the order of the day and made for a great spectator event too as spectacular wipe outs (aka crashes) were guaranteed.

The RN team dominated in both the freestyle and slope style events with consistent performances ensuring the points were racked up, pushing the Army into second place while the RAF took home the wooden spoon.

The event was fully supported by the British Kitesurfing Association ensuring things ran like clockwork and essential safety cover was on hand.

Kitesurfing remains one of the fastest growing and most dynamic water sports in the RN – see www.kitenavy.com for more info.



● *Lt Cdr Joe Wood reaches for the ball in the decisive clash with the Army*

Back where it belongs

THE Royal Navy Kayaking Association regained the Inter-Service **canoe polo** crown amid stiff competition from the Army and a valiant attempt from the RAF at HMS Temeraire.

RN and RM personnel gave up their weekend to represent the Navy in this closely-contested competition.

Canoe polo is a fast-paced game played in a pool or similar stretch of water, where two teams of five battle it out for seven minutes each way.

With tactics similar to five-a-side football but with many obvious differences, canoe polo is the only team sport discipline in canoeing.

In the Inter-Service competition the three Forces each enter three teams: men's A and B team and a ladies' team.

There are three titles to win: highest-placed ladies, highest-placed men and the Inter-Service Trophy, which points from games won by all three teams goes towards.

The Navy held the title for more than ten years, but a determined Army team, improving year after year, finally seized the trophy two years ago.

In 2009 operations meant that a number of key players could not make the competition; and unfortunately the Navy narrowly lost out.

2010 was a different story. Strength in depth in the two men's teams saw the gauntlet being laid down to the Army.

Unfortunately a broken ankle whilst playing hockey saw the ladies reduced to four and Lt Cdr Charlie Atkinson cheering from the poolside.

Despite being under strength, the RN ladies dominated the other two teams and even gave the RAF men food for thought.

By the time the final game was due to be played between the men's RN A and Army A, the trophy was already in the bag and the two teams were just playing for the gold medal position of highest-placed team.

With neither side having lost a game throughout the competition something had to give; and in the early stages of the first period the Army conceded their first goal.

Going into the second half the score was 2-1 to the Navy and the scene looked set for a nail-biting seven minutes.

The RN held their nerve, and tactically dominated the Army throughout, winning 3-1 and taking the gold medal slot. The Army A team were awarded silver but a strong men's Navy B team beat the RAF A team to the bronze.

To find out more about canoe polo or any other canoe sport discipline in the Navy, visit the RNKA's website at www.rnka.co.uk.

The Early and late show

AFTER an early season dogged by fixture cancellations, the seniors finally played their first competitive fixture against the Amateur Football Alliance at the Corinthian Casuals Stadium, in Tollworth, London.

Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

The Navy side set their stall out with a more attacking system than last year and teething problems were rather evident in the first ten minutes, with AFA only remaining scoreless as a result of some heroic defending from the captain, Cpl Dave Carns (3 Cdo Bde), and veteran PO Phil Archbold.

After three AFA attempts on goal, the RN side finally probed on 15 minutes when a slick midfield passing movement resulted in a shot from LPT Berry, which was saved.

Three minutes later an AFA striker received a delightful through pass to find himself one-on-one with the RN keeper, LPT Shortt, who saved bravely at his feet.

An almost-eventless 20 minutes followed, until the AFA striker yet again troubled the RN defence by twisting and turning, only for his shot to hit the post. A disappointing and at times disjointed first half for the RN ended end with the AFA shading the period.

Some choice words at half time resulted in a rejuvenated RN emerging from the changing room. While the Navy started the second half in energetic fashion, it still took some 15 minutes to start playing with any degree of pattern.

They started to make headway, with Mne Husbands (CTCRM) collecting the ball from deep to embark on a blistering dribble which culminated in a blocked shot.

During this period Mne Fox (CTCRM) excelled, controlling the central midfield battle. After only two minutes on the pitch POPT Way attacked the AFA full-back and delivered a sumptuous cross from the byline, which narrowly passed over C/Sgt Hope's head in the AFA box.

The RN were now dominating and the next attack from the right hand side by AB Parry (Illustrious) arrived at C/Sgt Hope's feet. He swivelled and delivered a thunderous drive towards the AFA goal which the AFA keeper saved superbly.

The Navy's dominance was rewarded when Mne Husbands dribbled past two defenders and squared a delightful ball to Mne Mark Connett (HQRM Band), who slid the ball under the keeper.

Whilst the RN remained dominant, AFA were always dangerous. A flash counter-attack found AB Parry clearing the ball desperately off his own goal line, while in injury time, an AFA cross deflected off Cpl Carns at considerable pace towards Shortt's goal.

The U19s took to the road for their second match of the season. After suffering a defeat to Middlesex FA in their first match they were determined to improve their performance and get a positive result.

Manager WO2 Marty Wallace named four debutants in his team which took to the field on a bright but cold late November Sunday against a strong AFA side at Potters Bar FC in Hertfordshire.

Both sides were eager to try to pass the ball well, but before the RN could get a foothold in the game some indecisive defending allowed an AFA striker to get a shot on target in the third minute.

The shot was well saved by new goalkeeper AET Jonny Curran (RNAS Yeovilton), but he could only parry it to the feet of an opposing player who tapped it in.

Undeterred, the Navy began to compete well in all areas of the pitch. On nine minutes good interplay by debutant strikers Mne Dave Hedley (Nelson) and ET(ME) Lewis Early (Sultan) resulted in a possible penalty when Early was contacted in the box; the referee waved play on.

Working well as a pair, Hedley latched on to an Early flick on and shot narrowly wide. However, in defence, the Navy could not afford to lose concentration as the AFA were still dangerous on the break.

Clearly on top, the RN won a corner on 24 minutes. ET(ME) Luke Smith's excellent delivery was met sweetly by Early just inside the six-yard box to power a header into the top left hand corner of the AFA net.

On 26 minutes the RN won another corner on the left. The success of the last set piece was evident and the same routine was performed again. Lightning can indeed strike twice as Early bulleted a carbon-copy header in to put the Navy 2-1 ahead.

The Navy defence were now more organised after early pressure from the opposition and dealt with most of the attacks well, but after 34 minutes, they failed to clear their lines properly and the ball broke to the opposition inside the Navy box. A mis-timed tackle saw the referee point to the spot. The penalty was well taken, sending AET Curran the wrong way and half-time arrived with the scores level.

The second period started well for the Navy: good combination play on the right by ET(ME) Andy Smith(Ark Royal) and ET(ME) Josh Jones (Bulwark) created a half-chance for Mne Hedley which was well saved.

On 52 minutes Curran saved superbly from a direct free kick which was heading for his top right corner. The Navy repaid in kind, counter-attacking quickly with Smith unleashing a fierce shot from 25 yards which was tipped over by the AFA keeper.

Further action at both ends saw AET Danny Brookwell (Culdrose) shoot narrowly wide and Curran produce two more fine saves.

A couple of injuries and tactical substitutions gave the Navy fresh legs and drive to go for the win.

Excellent work on the right from Hedley resulted in a cross which Early managed to get his head to. All on the sidelines thought he had got his hat-trick only to see the ball graze the bar and go over.

A move which typified the RN's attitude and desire was to prove decisive. Hedley again latched on to a flick-on. A last-gasp tackle looked to deny the opportunity, but man of the match Hedley never gave up and charged down the keeper's challenge, won the resulting header and the ball broke to him two yards out so he could smash it in and seal a fine 3-2 victory.

And finally, the shock of the first round of the Navy Cup (according to the RNFA PRO who just happens to serve aboard her) was provided by HMS Sutherland's demolition of CTCRM in a rearranged fixture.

The marines were clear favourites given the number of players available for selection, but a spirited performance from Sutherland, who went two goals down before fighting back, saw the T23 lads play some intelligent football and triumph convincingly, 6-2.

Chess dreams checked

LT DAVE Ross (Navy Command HQ) and Cpl Mike Redman RM (FPGRM) represented the Combined Services at **chess** in the NATO tournament in Køge, Denmark.

The tournament was opened by the Mayor, Marie Stærke, on a very cold morning in the small harbour of Køge with speeches and a parade through the town by the local defence force on horseback.

This was the 21st official tournament, taking place over seven rounds with 15 countries participating.

The standard of play was exceptionally high with International Masters and FIDE Masters playing for many nations; many games lasted a very demanding five hours.

If you haven't played competitive chess then it is similar to a very difficult exam – your head will hurt.

Cpl Mike Redman produced a very creditable score on his debut of 4/7 (three wins, two draws and two defeats).

Overall the UK team finished a disappointing 12th with the Germans taking the team and individual titles again.

The UK are seeking new talent to bolster the team ahead of the 2011 tournament in Lithuania.

The qualifying tournament will be held in HMS Nelson from May 26-30.

Anyone interested in playing contact Lt Dave Ross, **dave.ross393@mod.uk**.

BRNC triumph over Crabs

THE best and the brightest of the RN defeated their RAF counterparts at the Inter-College games.

The contest between Britannia Royal Naval College and the former Royal Naval Air Station Cranwell went to the wire with the result resting on the final element of the competition.

The contestants from RAF Cranwell (we thought we ought to give it the proper title...) proved particularly strong in the cross-country and traditional 'ramp-race' while BRNC displayed prowess on the hockey and rugby fields.

The final test was the 'superstars' challenge. Designed to test physical prowess, the task which clinched the title for BRNC was the pine pole lift which required an outstanding effort from the whole team.

Fan-tache-tic voyage

THE sun is shining, the *Rocky* theme tune is blaring in the background, a group of men are taking part in physical training.

This, however, is no normal phys session; this is the **Bronson Challenge** – named for Britain's hardest man.

The challenge? 1,000 press-ups, 1,000 pull-ups and 1,000 sit ups inside ten hours.

The original was devised – and completed – by the notorious hardman inside a prison and has since been adopted by athletes the world over, in this case, Cpl Aaron Laycock.

The NCO is not shy of taking on a challenge (given that he had recently run a marathon on the clearway of RFA Fort Victoria whilst the ship was alongside) and encouraged his Fleet Protection Group RM comrades to join in to raise dosh for the families of 40 Cdo men killed in Afghanistan.

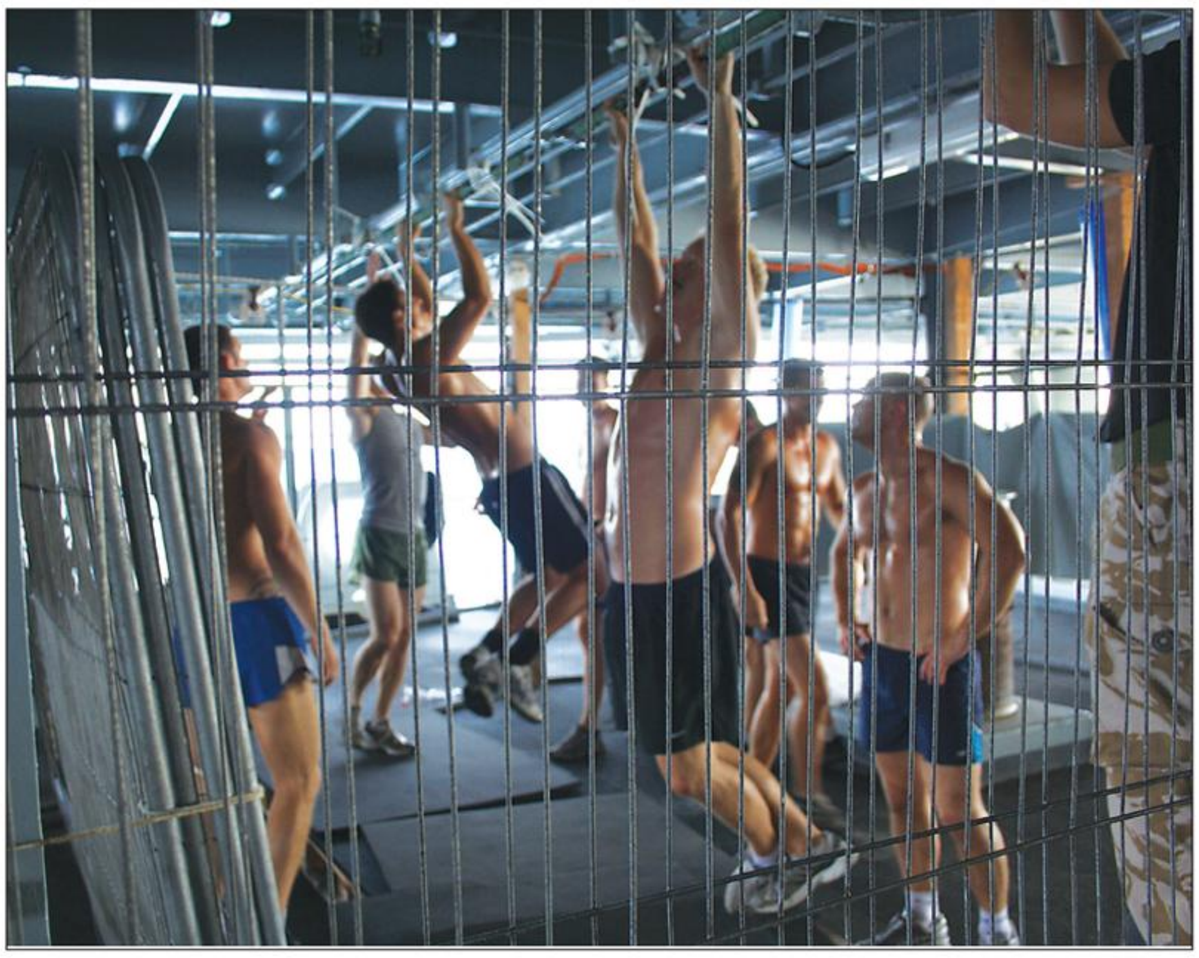
For an authentic feel, the Royal Marines decided to make use of a 'pen' on board, and the Hudson Reel deck of Fort Victoria was converted. Royals like to go the extra mile, so there was the added extra of having a Bronson-inspired moustache for the day...

So to go back to the opening paragraph... the sun is shining, the *Rocky* theme tune is blaring in the background and a group of men are taking part in physical training.

Then factor in that it's on the back end of a ship (sometimes known by our readers as the stern...), the heat is on average 35°C, cramped conditions, the actual 'physical challenge' itself and suddenly what appeared to be a phys session is now no normal phys session, but one of amazing endurance, strength and the willpower of everyone taking part to achieve the target, not only for themselves, but for the lives and families of their former comrades.

Throughout the day, members of the ship's company trotted down to the Hudson Reel deck to witness the challenge, among them Lt Maxine Burgess, Fort Vic's AVSO.

"Unable to get away from the high temperatures, some were even having to resort to ice/cold treatment between sets due to tendons starting to cramp up, but you looked at any one of them and in a strange way they were all still enjoying themselves [*that's perfectly normal for Royal Marines – Sports Ed*], pushing themselves and others on, not just to the total that they are looking to complete, but to surpass it," she said.



● *The commandos power their way to the target in the specially-created prison 'pen'*

"A new song came on, they were reinvigorated, and strangely enough they had enough energy to jump around to the music before launching into a new set."

Seven hours in, and the figures for press-ups and sit-ups were way past the target, with figures very close to the target for pull-ups.

More and more marines were now using ice/cold treatment to their hands and forearms; but at no point did any man want to quit.

A quick stop to calculate numbers achieved (and a very quick stop at that), a quick talk from Cpl Laycock – "It's seven hours in, you're doing really well, it's starting to hurt, but let's crack on and get it done. Welcome to the pain train, choo, ******* choo!" – a laugh from everyone, the music was back on and the pull-ups resumed.

The only break in proceedings came courtesy of King Neptune, as Fort Vic crossed the Equator mid-challenge.



● *As if Royals need an excuse for a dodgy 'tache... The FPGRM team on Fort Vic have Charles Bronson-style facial hair painted on*

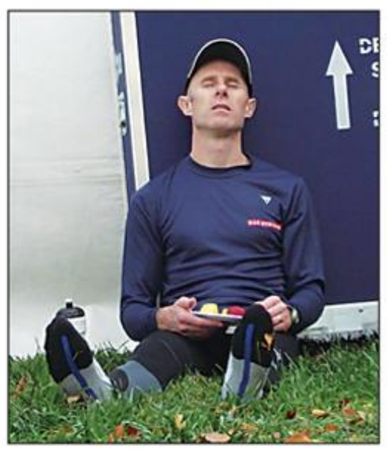
Pictures: Capt Daniel Eaton, FPGRM

The Royals trotted up to the flight deck, took their charges, tablet and dunking and headed back down to the 'pen' to carry on.

After nine hours and five minutes, the challenge was completed – in some cases it had been smashed: the highest individual score was 1,700 sit ups, 1,650 press ups and 1,050 press ups.

"Well done, it's been a hard day, but what we have achieved today is not a strength that is measured physically, but something that is only achieved mentally," Cpl Laycock told his fellow Royals.

The challenge raised around £1,800 for the 40 Cdo families.



Ace DC effort from Tony

TYPICALLY we only feature 'action' images in our sports pages.

But for Lt Cdr Tony Dunn, we'll make an exception.

The Culdrose-based officer is pictured here resting after his exertions in one of the world's most famous long-distance races: The Marine Corps Marathon in Washington DC.

The 26.2-mile slog around the US capital is the eighth biggest marathon in the world – nearly 22,000 runners completed the 2010 race.

No.23 across that finishing line was Lt Cdr Dunn, CO of the Maritime Aviation Support Force. That in itself is a hugely-impressive achievement.

He was also second Brit to cross the line and his time places him eighth in the UK ranking in the over 45 category – and all in his first marathon.

The marathon has been staged since the mid-70s and takes competitors past some of the iconic sights of Washington – Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, Smithsonian and Capitol – before ending in front of the famous Iwo Jima Memorial.

Lt Cdr Dunn reached the latter after pounding the DC streets for 2h 38m 11s, 15 minutes behind race winner Jacob Bradosky.

"It's been a long time coming but well worth waiting for!" said the MASF CO.

"I was also the first over 45 to cross the line and the second finisher from the Royal Navy – although only by one second because we crossed the line together!"

As well as the race for individual glory, the marathon sees the RN and US Marine Corps compete for the Challenge Cup.

Three women and five men donned RN colours in Washington with the cumulative times posted by the first three men and two fastest women counting. Sadly, in 2010, the Americans proved the stronger team.

Dennis takes U23 trophy

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capped against the RAF at Senior level and by the Combined Services' U23s last season.

Already acknowledged as one of the best lineout exponents in RN rugby, the marine has also added a penetrative ball-carrying role to his armoury.

These two attributes ensure that he always stands out in matches. Careful observers will also note his work rate and high tackle count, which means coaches can play him more like a traditional '6' than lock.

Appointed captain at the start of the season he worked well with coaching staff to ensure that the entire playing group remained on message and prepared to uphold the proud heritage of Navy rugby.

"Dennis was the clear choice of both coaches – CPOPT Clayton Patilla and POCIS Neil Evans – and team manager CPO Jim Hunter," said RN Director of Rugby, Lt Cdr Geraint Ashton Jones.

"He led the front on all occasions and brought the best out of the players around him, whilst also ensuring that the whole squad bought into the team ethos. He is a player with a very promising future."

Heavy going on the Teifi

A SMALL contingent of kayakers flew the flag for the Royal Navy on the River Teifi in western Wales at the Inter-Service **Canoe Slalom** championships.

Canoe slalom is an Olympic sport where competitors negotiate a series of gates on a whitewater course, *writes Lt Helen Coxon, secretary RNKA*.

Slightly more complicated than some of the other Inter-Service kayaking events, paddlers are penalised two seconds for hitting a gate and 50 seconds for missing one.

With most of the regular Navy competitors away (including the discipline secretary), five paddlers made it to the Llandysul Slalom Course.

HMS Raleigh's CPO 'General' Patten (*pictured, right, making his way through a gate in his C1*) was the fastest RN/RM competitor taking 17th place in the Men's K1 but was closely followed by LMEA Rich Moore (Sultan) in 18th.

AET Steve Riley (Culdrose) is more at home in the disciplines of sprint and marathon (on flat water) but he transferred his skills to moving water, taking 23rd place.

In his first Inter-Services S/Lt Oli Fairbairn (Raleigh) came 24th, beating members of the Army who had spent most of the week on the course practising.

In the ladies event, Lt Helen Coxon (Excellent) took the bronze ensuring all three Services were represented in the medals.

Four of the five RN paddlers also competed in the C1 competition.

They were placed seventh through to tenth in a considerably more difficult event with the competitor kneeling rather than sitting and having one blade rather than two.



With only five competitors the Royal Navy team accumulated 66 points which was considerably behind both the Army and the Air Force – but a perfectly good score for such a small team (the Army, on the other hand, had 30 competitors...).

The Navy team is always looking for new paddlers; the prerequisite is to be able to pass an RN swimming test or to be confident in a kayak.

More details at **www.rnka.co.uk** or e-mail (**slalom@rnka.co.uk**).

All standards are welcome and training can be provided.

No laughing matter

Continued from page 48

match award for a good defensive display despite the result.

The two fixtures were not the sole activity on the ice this past month: the association also staged three 'grass roots' events on the South Coast.

The first for Portsmouth at Gosport was taken by Kev Cave and Lt Lappin and attended by 30 Service personnel from Nelson, Ark Royal and Edinburgh, four of whom showed interest in returning for more formal training.

The two other grass roots sessions were back-to-back events at Plymouth Pavilions for HMS Raleigh and RNAS Culdrose, led by Lt Cdr Al Bernard (UKHO) and Cpl J Underwood (RM Poole).

More grass roots events are planned this year. For further details (and fixture lists) see **www.rniha.org.uk** or e-mail Kev Cave **manager@rniha.org.uk** , LS Smalley **rn-admin@rniha.org.uk** or Lt Lappin **treasurer@rniha.org.uk**. Training is at Planet Ice in Gosport every Tuesday evening at 10.30pm.

Next month



Strong Lynx – how 815 NAS stays ahead of the game



Taking the plunge at the Defence Diving School



Final flight – the Harrier makes its last appearance

9 770028 167139 01>

SPORT



● *Mne Hubbs chases the puck during the Destroyers' heavy away defeat to the Milton Keynes Jesters*

Pictures: Chris Dickens, mjdphoto.biz

No laughing matter

DESPITE their names, the Basingstoke Hyenas and Milton Keynes Jesters proved to be serious opposition for a depleted RN Destroyers ice hockey team.

The Senior Service entertained the Hyenas on home 'turf' – Planet Ice in Gosport – and, in keeping with recent fixtures, the face-off was at 11pm, *writes Lt Adam Lappin, general secretary of the RNIHA.*

The game started at the usual high tempo as fresh legs stepped on to the ice to start the game but it took ten minutes of fast end-to-end play to break the deadlock when Lt Lappin (HMS Nelson) fired a slapshot from the neutral zone past the Hyenas goalkeeper.

This served as the catalyst for the visitors and after the award of a penalty shot (quite rare these days), Basingstoke went in at the end of the first period leading 3-1.

The second period saw the teams evenly-matched with the visitors scoring early on in the period before LS(CIS) D Smalley (Illustrious) pulled a goal back with a shot straight from the face-off to the left of the Basingstoke goalkeeper sailing past his glove to light the lamp behind the net.

The third period opened with the Hyenas scoring after 55 seconds to make the score 5-2 in their favour, which left the Navy having to dig deep to stop the game from disappearing over the horizon.



● *Stand-in keeper AET David Jones thwarts the Jesters*

James Morgan scored for the Navy with a shot from the point (position just inside the attacking zone) that left the Basingstoke keeper searching the air for the puck with a move that would be right at home in Joanna's.

The visitors continued to add to their score and with ten minutes to go in the game the score was 6-3 to Basingstoke.

ET(WE) Peter Shaughnessey (Type 23 Pool), continuing his recent good form, showed some expert close-in stick handling to put the puck in the net to make the score 6-4, only for the visitors to score 30 seconds later to keep their three-goal lead.

RN manager Kev Cave scored a late consolation, but his team were unable to break the Basingstoke defence so the game finished in a 7-5 defeat for the RNIHA.

'Man' of the match was Pte Lisa Weston (3 PWRR – on loan due to a RN keeper shortage) who despite the defeat was outstanding for the sailors between the pipes.

The second clash saw the Navy team travel to Milton Keynes to face the Jesters in a return fixture after their defeat to the RN in October.

This match also started at 11pm, but there was chance for an overnight stay in a nearby hotel for the team (with the exception of a few who travelled back to Pompey, returning at 4am!). It also gave the team the opportunity to celebrate a birthday of one of RNIHA's stalwarts: Lt Cdr Al Bernard was celebrating the issue of his free bus pass (he was actually 42 but he looks older and his joints creak!).

The game began (after a well-timed performance of a Village People song) with the home team enjoying an extra line on the bench (20 skaters to the RN's 15 – the Navy suffered from the now-common 'OPDEF' of a lack of available goalkeepers).

AET David Jones (RNAS Yeovilton) again gave up his place as a skater to come to the rescue in goal for the RN – which would influence the final score.

The Jesters were obviously a bit funny (ho-ho) about their defeat the previous month and were out to prove a point by scoring a number of goals in quick succession in the opening period.

They went unanswered for some time until LET(ME) Haywood (Edinburgh) scored his debut goal in a RN Destroyers shirt that left the Jesters goalkeeper stranded, watching helplessly as the puck hit the back of his net.

Sadly this would be the last time the RN scored in this fixture and the home team ended the game winners with a score of 8-1.

Although AET Jones played another outstanding game as the stand-in keeper, it was Steve Baker who was given the RN man of the

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Ard going on the bikes

THIS is something brand-new north of the Border.

No, not bicycles – they've had them for some time.

This is the inaugural RN Scotland **cross-country mountain bike** competition – and the chap in the saddle (PO Colin Abbot – *pictured here by LA(Phot) Stu Hill, FRPU North*) is on his way to victory as he pedals through the Ardgartan Forest.

The race saw cyclists cover a challenging 14km (8½-mile)route over rough and muddy terrain, reaching a peak of 200m above sea level.

Challenging as the course was, it was made all the more difficult by the unpredictable Arrochar weather, which saw a relatively bright start transform into a torrential downpour, leaving the sailors soaked but their spirits undampened.

PO Abbot was first over the finishing line in 41 25s – 178 seconds faster than his nearest challenger, Lt Cdr Gordon King.

It took more than six months of planning to organise the event – permission had to be sought to ride through Ardgartan – but all the effort was worth it as some warming tea, coffee, soup and rolls were handed to competitors at the finish before Naval Base Commander Clyde, Cdre Chris Hockley, presented the prizes.

"Despite the weather everyone agreed that they had an excellent time," said organiser LPT Dan Kerr. "The forests and mountains around Arrochar proved to be the perfect venue for the event and we feel fortunate that they are just on our doorstep.

"We will certainly be having a look at setting another date for the next competition, hopefully in the not too distant future."

Dennis takes U23 trophy

HAVING led his U23 team through an undefeated season, Mne Dennis Scotthorne (42 Cdo RM) was awarded the Brian Weeks Memorial Trophy as U23 **rugby union** player of the year.

Now in its fourth year, the trophy keeps alive the memory of a stalwart of RNRU – and champion of young talent.

In Dennis' case, the award acknowledges his contribution and leadership on and off the field.

The green beret was also

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100% NEW LIFESTYLE. NEW ZEALAND. NAVY
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Farewell, Ark Royal



ONLY the falling sun, tinting the horizon an orangey-red was missing.

Out of the gloom and swirling mist, which rose and fell with the bitter December breeze, a tug guides a great ship of the line for the final time.

And like the Fighting Temeraire 170 years before her, the passing of Her Majesty's Ship Ark Royal draws a line under an era.

For the first time in 97 years there is no ship named Ark Royal on the order books, in build, in refit, or on the high seas.

For the first time in a century, the Royal Navy, creator of the aircraft carrier, pioneer of wings over the sea from Cuxhaven to the catapult, from the Sopwith Pup and Sea Vampire to the Sea Harrier, has no fixed-wing aircraft from which to project the nation's influence wherever it desires.

Nor was there a fixed-wing farewell for Ark on her final entry into Portsmouth.

The weather kiboshed the Harrier flypast. It put a stop to the anticipated thousands of well-wishers descending on the seafronts of Portsmouth and Gosport.

Instead a handful of hardy souls stood on the wall at Fort Blockhouse. A few hundred lined Portsmouth's ancient ramparts from the Round to Square Tower and the Hot Walls (surely a misnomer in this weather); council workmen were still shovelling away the snow and sprinkling buckets of sand over the stones as well-wishers arrived.

A police launch faded in and out of the mist eddies hugging the Solent.

Somewhere in the distance the strain of bagpipes, the sound unmistakeable, the tune indistinguishable.

And the high-pitched whine of engines.

In the murk the barely-definable outline of something solid, slowly becoming increasingly distinct.

A ski ramp. And six silhouettes standing atop.

The mist began to part.

Two tugs, their upper decks still crowned with the snow which blanketed the country, carefully shepherded the carrier, flanked by launches, their lights flashing a brilliant blue amid the grey.

How different from Ark Royal's finest hour, her departure for the Gulf in 2003, a brilliant January day filled with all the pomp, ceremony and emotion the occasion warranted.

Continued on page ii





● *Farewell to the city of Ark's birth... (Above and right) Ship's*

'Never more shall sunset lay golden robe on he nor starlight

Continued from page i

The mood on Friday December 3 2010 was muted.

There were few flags, no placards, no children waving mini Union Jacks. No tape recorders blaring *Rule Britannia* or other martial tunes. No cheers.

Maybe people were numbed by the cold, but most of the well-wishers were more stunned by the decision to axe the flagship at such short notice. A Royal Navy without an Ark Royal is like Romeo without Juliet, Castor without Pollux, Neptune without his trident.

As the carrier approached the harbour entrance the ship's main broadcast kicked into life.

Typically it's *HMS Ark Royal ship's company, ho!*

Today not an order but an acknowledgment: *Thank you to everyone on the Round Tower, Hot Walls and the City of Portsmouth for showing your support.*

From somewhere on Broad Street a klaxon sounded a couple of times.

From the back of Round Tower a voice boomed.

Three cheers for HMS Ark Royal.

The well-wishers responded.

The ship's company responded (a few broke into an impromptu Mexican Wave, not necessarily permitted during Procedure Alpha, but we'll let them off...).

And then the grey mist devoured Ark once more as she entered the harbour proper, her enormous decommissioning pennant running along the superstructure and flight deck, before limply trailing in the water.

As she disappeared from view in Old Portsmouth, so she approached her final berth.

On Victory Jetty small groups of hardy families and well-wishers had gathered in the freezing fog a good hour or so before the Ark was due to come alongside.

Many took refuge in a draughty marquee, where red, blue and white helium balloons emblazoned with 'HMS Ark Royal' and Union Jack flags were handed out as a present from the ship.

Others braved the outdoors and stamped their feet to keep some sensation in their toes as they queued for hot drinks and bacon butties at a mobile canteen.

Around 1,200 families and friends had been expected in the naval base. On the day snow and ice prevented many from making the journey, but there were still several hundred people on the jetty.

The weak sun was attempting, without success, to break through the spectral clouds, but over the sea a thick, grey fog reduced visibility almost down to nothing.

Even the large commercial ferries were heard before they were seen, as they departed through the mist, sounding their foghorns.

And at 9am the command 'Colours' was heard on HMS Dauntless, berthed further along the jetty, but she was so wreathed in grey fog that her ensign could only be made out dimly as it was hauled up the staff.

It was difficult to make out the Ark's outline until she passed the Round Tower. Then shouts of "Here she comes" and "That's our ship!" went up, and the huge outline of her ski-ramp lined with sailors loomed through the grey fog as she made her way slowly through the harbour, a police launch ahead of her flashing its blue lights.

The Royal Marines Band, which had provided some welcome cheer, timed it perfectly. As the Ark inched her way alongside, her decommissioning pennant fluttering in the Arctic wind, they struck up the opening bars of *Sailing*.

If ever a ship could say they were playing her tune, this was it. There were cheers and shouts from the families and tears wiped from eyes, perhaps from the cold, certainly from the emotion.

And so after 50,762 hours at sea and 621,551 miles sailed in a career spanning three decades, Capt Jerry Kyd gave the order no commanding officer ever wishes to impart:

Ring off main engines.

And so ended the carrier's brief farewell tour: first to Scotland and the Glen Mallan ammunition depot where the magazines were emptied of their ordnance, including 1,000lb bombs for the Harrier GR9 jets, Stingray torpedoes used by Lynx and Merlin helicopters, and 20mm rounds for the ship's guns.

Then around the top of Scotland to Newcastle, the city of her birth. Over 12,000 people braved the cold and rain, and queued for hours for the privilege of coming onboard the iconic warship.

"It was amazing to see all those people cheering and waving at us," said ET(WE) Marcelle John, who hails from St Vincent and the Grenadines and has never

● *Farewell to the Harrier... Handlers and technicians prepare Naval and RAF jump jets for their final carrier launch*



● *Farewell to the*

pictures: mid kieran hatchley, hms blazer, po(phot) ray jones and la(phot) abbie gadd, hms ark royal, and cpl mark dixon, 1(f) sqn raf

company fall in for Procedure Alpha as the carrier leaves the Tyne

er,
tremble on the waves that part at her gliding.'

experienced scenes (and perhaps temperatures) like it.

"I knew of the links between the Ark and Newcastle, but nothing prepares you for seeing the strength of local feeling at first hand."

AB(CIS) Marcus Stewart added: "It was comforting to learn that other people share our sadness at the demise of this fine ship – the strength of local support was overwhelming."

Indeed it was. Professional sporting clubs offered free tickets, amateurs challenged the football, rugby and golf teams to matches, and the lady who ran a burger van next to the ship's berth baked the crew (well some of them) a cake.

It was on this river on December 14 1978 – the middle of the 'winter of discontent' – that Ark Royal V was laid down on the slipway at the Swan Hunter yard. It was on this river on June 2 1981 – as those in the Corridors of Power were finalising the White Paper *The Way Forward*, which would scythe through the Fleet – that the Queen Mother launched the ship. And it was from this river in June 1985 – as the nation geared up for the age-defining Live Aid concert – that Ark Royal sailed for her future home for the first time.

And as she sailed from the Tyne for the final time – in pretty foul conditions – the banks of the north and south side of the river were lined with spectators and traffic slowed to watch the unique spectacle.

Some 40 miles off Newcastle the chapter was closed on another piece of Ark Royal history: her association with the Harrier as four RAF and RN jets departed – the last opportunity to witness a jump jet operate from the decks of a Royal Navy aircraft carrier.

800 Naval Air Squadron and RAF 1(F) Sqn – both victims, like Ark Royal, of October's Strategic Defence and Security Review – brought aboard Harrier flown by naval and Air Force aviators.

Each squadron embarked two GR9s – the final variant of the Ground Reconnaissance 1 which entered service in 1969 – painting the tails of their jets with the respective squadron colours.

And one by one they departed at 9am on Wednesday November 24 2010: Capt Mike Carty RM, Lt Matt Fooks-Bale and Flt Lt Em Rickards.

The honour of flying the very last Harrier to rise up the ski ramp and lumber skywards – a sight which never fails to impress (and deafen) – fell to Lt Cdr James Blackmore, a naval aviator flying for the RAF.

He's a veteran, like most of Joint Force Harrier, of operations in Afghanistan, as well as 90 sorties from Ark Royal. The jump jet may have a 50-year heritage but, says the officer, "the aircraft's capability still astounds me".

He continued: "I remember witnessing a Harrier in the hover when I was just eight and since then I've wanted to do nothing else.

"I've flown Harriers for more than ten years, the training in complex, but the added challenge and excitement of hovering a Harrier off the port side of Ark Royal before landing vertically is an experience I will miss immensely."

After launching, they flew overhead in a spectacular flypast to wave goodbye, and to allow the ship's company to do likewise to another icon of British industry.

For the jets there was an air combat exercise to perform before returning to RAF Cottesmore, directed by a Bagger Sea King of 849 NAS – guiding Harrier operations for the final time, and thus breaking a chain which began nearly three decades ago.

While the Harriers and Sea King waged mock war, Ark made her way across the North Sea and the city which was both her first and final foreign port of call.

The carrier spent five days in Hamburg berthed on the edge of the Hanseatic city's centre (and 15 minutes' walk from the Reeperbahn...), a final run ashore to reward the ship's company for their unstinting service.

As well as enjoying Hamburg's hospitality for the sixth time in her 25-year career – the city's principal organ, the *Hamburger Abendblatt* hailed Ark Royal "Hamburg's most loyal grey ship in all the navies of the world" – there was a last official reception on board.

As well as Britain's honorary consul in Hamburg, Claus Budelmann, and Ambassador to Germany, Simon McDonald, civic dignitaries were invited aboard. The latter were apparently impressed by Capt Kyd and his "sea-dog charm" and that he was "remarkably well informed about city politics".

As for his ship, after negotiating the fifty miles of the Elbe to its

Continued on page iv

● *Farewell to Hamburg... Tugs assist Ark Royal as she leaves her berth to make her way up the Elbe*

● *Baggers... A Sea King Mk7 of 849 NAS watches as a Harrier prepares for take-off*

● *Last chance to see... Two Harrier GR9s stage a fly-past before leaving Ark for good*



picture: la(phot) stu hill, frpu north



HMS Ark Royal V, 1985-2010

HMS Ark Royal*

Armada	1588	Spartivento	1940
Cadiz	1596	Mediterranean	1940-41
Dardanelles	1915	'Bismarck'	1941
Norway	1940	Malta Convoys	1941

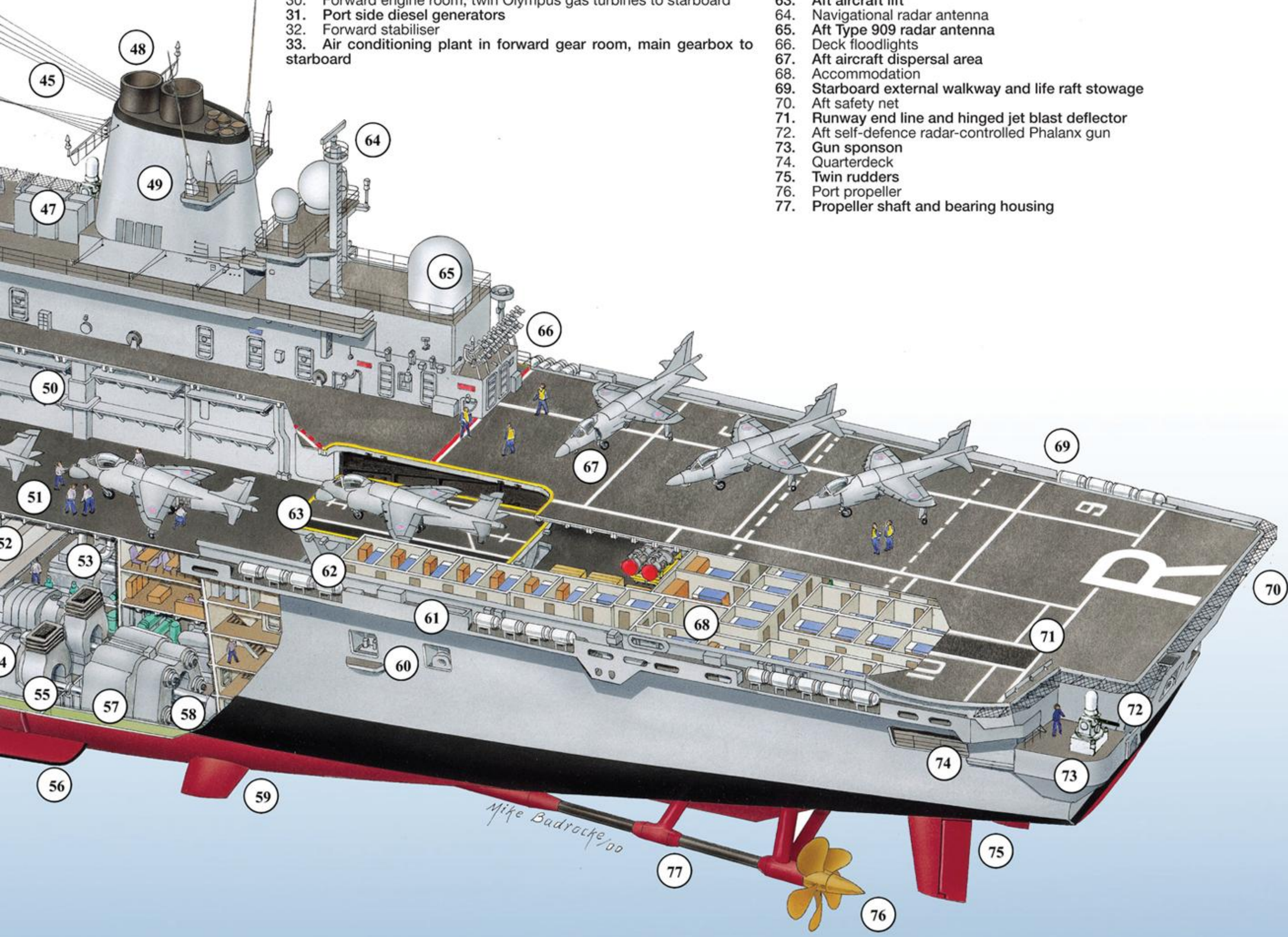
Class: Invincible-class aircraft carrier
Motto: *Desire n'a pas Repos* (zeal does not rest)
Pennant number: R07
Builder: Swan Hunter, Wallsend
Laid down: December 14, 1978
Launched: June 2, 1981
Commissioned: November 1, 1985
Displacement: 22,000 tons
Length: 689ft (210m)
Flight deck: 551ft (168m)
Beam: 118ft (36m)
Draught: 24½(7.5m)
Speed: in excess of 30kts
Complement: 650 ship's company; over 1,000 with embarked air group/battle staff
Propulsion: 4 x Olympus gas turbines generating 97,000shp
Armament: 3 x Phalanx automated machine-guns; 2 x Oerlikon 20mm machine guns
Helicopter: up to 24 aircraft – combination of FA2 Sea Harriers/GR7 Harriers; Merlin Mk1; Sea King Mk7 AEW

* Graphic and facts refer to Ark Royal following her 2001 refit

picture: la(phot) luis holden, 800 nas

inside

1. **Forward self-defence radar-controlled Phalanx gun**
2. Flight deck forward 'knuckle'
3. **Westland Sea King HAS5 helicopter**
4. Forward aircraft dispersal area
5. **'Ski-jump' assisted take-off ramp**
6. Twin anchors
7. **Safety net**
8. Gemini craft stowage
9. **Sonar housing**
10. Cable fairlead and mooring bollard
11. **Forward reception area and accommodation ladder stowage**
12. Life raft stowage
13. **Forward aircraft lift**
14. Helicopter safety area deck markings
15. **Aircraft towing tractor**
16. Sea Harrier FA2
17. **Crane**
18. Forward Type 909 radar antenna
19. **Admiral's bridge**
20. Compass platform
21. **Flight control ('Flyco')**
22. Search radar
23. **UHF communications antenna**
24. Forward antenna mast
25. **Forward engine room exhausts**
26. Forward funnel
27. **Island deck and walkway**
28. Lift-operating Y-strut
29. **Hydraulic ram and pumping equipment**
30. Forward engine room, twin Olympus gas turbines to starboard
31. **Port side diesel generators**
32. Forward stabiliser
33. **Air conditioning plant in forward gear room, main gearbox to starboard**
34. Midships sponson
35. **Decoy launchers**
36. Port 30mm cannon
37. **24ft motor boat**
38. Crew mess compartment, typical
39. **Hanger deck overhead travelling crane**
40. Self-propelled deck crane
41. **36ft work boat**
42. ESM antenna
43. **Search radar**
44. Twin SCOT satellite navigation antenna
45. **Communications antenna cables**
46. Aft antenna mast
47. **Starboard decoy launchers and 30mm cannon**
48. Aft engine room exhausts
49. **Aft funnel**
50. Hangar
51. **Hangar deck**
52. Aft engine room
53. **Starboard diesel generators**
54. Twin Olympus gas turbines
55. **Fuel tankage**
56. Bilge keel
57. **Port main gearbox**
58. Gearbox output shaft to port propeller
59. **Aft stabiliser**
60. Aft cable fairlead and mooring bollard
61. **External walkway**
62. Life raft stowage
63. **Aft aircraft lift**
64. Navigational radar antenna
65. **Aft Type 909 radar antenna**
66. Deck floodlights
67. **Aft aircraft dispersal area**
68. Accommodation
69. **Starboard external walkway and life raft stowage**
70. Aft safety net
71. **Runway end line and hinged jet blast deflector**
72. Aft self-defence radar-controlled Phalanx gun
73. **Gun sponson**
74. Quarterdeck
75. **Twin rudders**
76. Port propeller
77. **Propeller shaft and bearing housing**



HMS ARK ROYAL



‘If ever anything without a soul deserved honour or affection, we owed them here.’

Continued from page iii

estuary, she made haste for the waters off the Isle of Wight in preparation for her final entry to Portsmouth.

The aim was to steam ‘the wrong way’ up the Solent – past the Needles, Cowes and Gilkicker Point, while the Harriers paid a final tribute, roaring over the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour as Ark sailed in.

Instead, the ship’s company awoke on the penultimate day of Ark’s active service to find the flight deck blanketed by snow. The forecast for the following day was little better.

And so Plan B. Shovel off all the snow. No fly-past. Anchor at Outer Spit Buoy. Sail at 9.30am on Friday December 3 2010.

Twenty minutes before weighing anchor, the ship’s company fell in. If temperatures were above freezing, the sea fug and Arctic blast ensured it felt much colder – but not for these reasons did her men and women well up.

“I had a tear in my eye when I saw all the crowds of people out for us,” said PO Paddy Ashe, hangar PO.

“Everyone is very appreciative of the effort they made to come to see us.”

“I got a bit emotional especially when we got alongside and there was the Royal Marines band and all the people cheering. It makes me proud to be British.”

The senior rate has now spent his final day at sea. For his shipmates an uncertain future awaits.

Many of her ship’s company – including her Commanding Officer – will decamp to Rosyth to join Ark’s older sister HMS Illustrious. Many more will bomb-burst around the Fleet.

Capt Kyd’s command of Ark has been brief – he only took the reins this autumn. It was still plenty of time to get to know the Mighty Ark.

“I have had the opportunity to reflect on the honour and privilege it has been to be able to command this ship and the people within her,” he said.

“The famous ‘spirit of the Ark’ remains alive and well; I am certain that all those who move on from this ship in the coming months will spread this spirit and keep it alive wherever they go throughout the Fleet.”

His ship’s company has not yet dispersed entirely – the mess decks and passages will echo with Jackspeak long into 2011, for there is much to remove from Ark Royal as she de-stores.

And there will be one last public outing for her men and women: a farewell parade in Portsmouth’s Guildhall Square on Saturday January 22.

But Ark Royal herself will sail no more – not under the White Ensign at any rate.

Now she belongs to the ages.